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Firm unveils initiative to boost students critical thinking

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By Oluwatope Lawanson

The Academy Press PLC and Ekenua & Co. Ltd. have unveiled the Million Classics Programme, a civic-education initiative.

The aim is to nurture a generation of readers who are not only academically sound but also equipped with the intellectual and leadership capacity to contribute meaningfully to society.

Mr Maxwell Marshall, the Local Programme Lead, said this at the distribution of 1,500 copies of *Animal Farm* to students in three senior secondary schools on Friday in Lagos.

According to him, this marks the first phase of a broader rollout across schools in Education District VI.

He noted that the initiative aimed at strengthening critical thinking, moral reasoning and leadership among secondary school students in Nigeria.

“The initiative, implemented in partnership with Lagos State Education District VI, is designed as a structured learning cycle where students read classic texts, engage in guided discussions.

“They also write essays assessed by an independent panel, and participate in an awards event recognising outstanding performance.

“The programme is delivered through a joint venture between Academy Press PLC, a publicly listed Nigerian printing company with over six decades of experience, and Ekenua & Co. Ltd, a firm operating between London and Lagos,” he said.

Marshall disclosed that the programme was governed by a Cooperation Agreement and supervised by a joint Steering Committee to ensure consistency and quality across all programme cycles.

He said the “Launch Cycle” was being executed in collaboration with the Office of the Tutor-General and Permanent Secretary, Education District VI, led by Mrs Mojisola Yusuff, whose Reading Culture Initiative served as the operational partner in participating schools.

Marshall expressed appreciation to stakeholders supporting the initiative.

“We are grateful for the cooperation of the Lagos State Tutor-General’s office for Education District VI, and for the commitment of our partner schools, educators and supporters who share our belief that access to great books, paired with structured engagement, can broaden perspectives and shape lifelong learning,” he said.

According to him, school liaisons will, in the coming weeks, coordinate a thematic essay competition during the summer holidays.

He said: “This will enable participating students to further explore the themes of Animal Farm and articulate their ideas through writing.

“The Million Classics Programme is a long-term initiative aimed at expanding nationwide through a state-sponsored model, with the goal of giving students across Nigeria access to classic literature and opportunities to develop essential life skills.

Mrs. Oluwakemi Ogunnubi, Managing Director of Academy Press PLC, said the programme reflected the company’s longstanding commitment to education in Nigeria.

“Academy Press has printed books for Nigerian classrooms for over sixty years, and we understand what it means when a young person opens a book that will stay with them for life.

“The Million Classics Programme is an ambitious and important undertaking, and we are proud to be founding it in partnership with Ekenua & Co. Placing the world’s great classics into the hands of Nigerian secondary school students.

“Beginning in Lagos is exactly the kind of work we believe our industry should be doing.

“We look forward to what this programme will mean for students across Nigeria as it grows,” she said.

Also speaking, Mr Osamede Okhomina, Managing Director of Ekenua & Co. Ltd, emphasised the programme’s focus on developing independent thinking among students.

“Our students can read. What we owe them is the chance to think carefully, critically, and for themselves.

“The programme is built on the belief that great books, paired with real engagement, are among the most effective tools we have for building a generation of Nigerian readers who become thinkers, and thinkers who become leaders.

“This Launch Cycle is the beginning of something we intend to grow across the country,” he said.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Academy Press PLC is responsible for print production, warehousing and logistics, while Ekenua & Co. Ltd. provides strategic direction and programme delivery expertise. (NAN) (www.nannews.ng)

Edited by Vivian Ihechu