



# Okang'a Ooko

Novelist, Editor, Writer & Designer

Curriculum Vitae, 2018

## BRIEF BIO & CONTACTS:

ooko@okangaooko.com/ URL: okangaooko.com / ph: +254 722 493 896; Aged 50yrs; Married to Betty (nurse); 4 kids; lives in Nairobi: a passionate follower of Jesus Christ, plays guitar, loves old Congolese rumba. **OTHER INTERESTS:** Product design, 3D graphics (especially I enjoy Maya), hand drawing, painting, vector graphics. I do pastels, watercolours and oils. **READING:** I love the written word. Even if I don't have time, I read. Topics vary from, technological developments around the globe, historical fiction, fantasy to modern African literature. These days I enjoy reading autobiographies and historical novels. My favourite authors are Achebe, Tolstoy, Ian Banks, Austen, Orwell, Oyono, LaGuma, Dickens, Ishiguro, Forsythe, Hemmingway and Bitek.

## Artist, Author, Editor, Writer & Designer with 20+ Years Publishing Experience

I am an artist, designer, author, editor and a creative freelance writer with over twenty years experience in the industry working in print and online media. I am a novelist and short story author with work appearing in various print venues. As a journalist, I mostly write feature articles on the subject of music for Kenyan publications. I also create content for technical manuals, company profiles and websites, and I write copy for advertisement. I am a trained graphic designer with 20+ years experience and I also develop websites. As an artist, I am a realist and work mostly in charcoal, oil, pastels and water colours, my subjects being wildlife, nature and portraits.

## SUMMARY:

I am a novelist who is currently publishing books with a major Nairobi City publishing house. I am a talented writer and an occasional journalis, mostly writing features. I am

an enthusiastic and creative reader-focused writer, adept at details, and produce first-rate work. I am gifted with zeal, energy, tremendous integrity and common sense. A reviewer once said *"Ooko is exceptional. From the quality of his work to the adherence to deadlines, he is amazing. He communicates very effectively and I am confident whatever task is thrown at him, he can handle with flying colors!"*

As an author, I have written, formatted, and published many books (Amazon Kindle and print) in the last few years. I edit books for independent self-published authors and writers looking to get their work traditionally published. I've worked as a freelancer and development editor for hundreds of clients in a wide variety of writing genres, categories and styles, including fiction, non-fiction and technical, essay, poetry, drama, memoir, inspirational, Christian, academic, autobiography, critique, law, business (promotional writing, proposals, presentations, press releases etc), scientific, software documentation, and more. I have worked for newspapers and magazines as a writer, editor and copyeditor. I have authored first-rate essays and articles for publication in print and online venues and I have mentored high school and college students as well as writers of all ages wishing to advance their skills. My strengths are simplifying sentences, finding plot holes, and proofreading for technical error.

I am also an artist professionally trained as graphic designer for print and electronic publishing. With enough experience in corporate business management, I have extensive experience in the art of visual communications and I have worked as a creative director in the dynamic and restless Nairobi corporate branding and advertising reality. My real experience in graphic design for print started when I realised, after working for many years as a product designer, that graphic design and computers is what I naturally loved and where I achieved more excellence. I have wide recognition as an expert in creative graphic arts leading me to taking positions at creative agencies as Senior Graphic Designer (Marketpower International), Art Director (Mashariki Brand Communication), Creative Director (Oba Kunta Octopus) and Communications Director (Newlife SDA Church). I have skillfully created and produced graphics and layout for print materials such as books, newsletters, brochures, flyers and reports. I have created corporate identity for businesses and smart graphics for websites, advertising, marketing and promotion, and brand development. My agency, Oba Kunta Octopus, is committed to advancing design as a professional craft, strategic tool, essential business implement and vital cultural force.

During my seventeen years experience as a designer and a professional, I have worked in many and varied roles bordering on product design for development. I have worked in Kenya with Undugu Society, and with Housing and Building Research Institute,

University of Nairobi in Association with Wagenigen University, Holland. Later I worked with ILO, FIT Resources, FIT Uganda Ltd. and Technoserve. In 2000, I co-founded FIT Resources Ltd. as a development consultancy firm through which I effectively implemented product design and technology consultancies.

For years I have been known and seen, and best regarded as a good designer. I have worked professionally as a writer, designer and consultant in development projects in roles like project designer, design project manager and design consultant. I see myself simply as a designer with broad experiences and a penchant for doing hard tasks that directly use my expertise to increase value and benefits to businesses in Kenya. This is to say the least. I use every opportunity to expand my knowledge. Besides being very creative, I am a compulsive learner. I am a hard working person and I can do long and solitary projects that requires commitment and high levels of creativity. I am also a good manager and an effective organizer and team player. I think I have enough experience to do more than just creative projects.

#### RECENT FEEDBACK:

*"Ooko was an amazing writer. He explored all details of our topics and made independent research on his own. His writing skills clearly show a deep academic foundation with talent to structure opinions in a neutral way. I would fully recommend him to all technical and non-technical works."* - Dr. Oseno Ben, lecturer, School of Business, Masinde Muliro University, Kakamega, Kenya, September 2018.

*"Wonderful and a great editor. Would recommend."* - Dr. Evelyne Ndege, Lecturer, School of Music, Dayster University, Nairobi, May 2018.

*"Ooko was exactly what I was looking for. I asked for honesty and he gave it. I would definitely hire him for any future project. He is a vital asset that made my work better."* - Prof. Peter Wanyande, Lecturer, School of Political Science, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, May 2018.

#### OVERVIEW OF SKILLS:

Experienced writer, editor, proofreader, and designer with a long, successful career in publishing. I specialise in print and web publications include creative prose and nonfiction in the form of ebooks, web content, documentation, articles (consumer magazine and academic), coursework, advertising materials and blogs.

## Core Competence:

I am a stickler for detail and especially mindful of grammar and punctuation. I offer my clients honest, original and high-quality work on time according to their specifications. I specialize in:

- Fiction writing (Fiction of any length: flash fiction, poetry, drama, short stories, novellas, novels novels, short stories, poetry, character led narratives etc);
- Ghostwriting (Fiction and nonfiction);
- Business writing (Technical writing, Promotional writing, Instructional guidebooks, Inspirational books, Reports, Company profile, Company mission statements, Business plans, Ad copy, Short product descriptions etc);
- Memoirs and autobiographies;
- Online writing (eBooks, blog writing, social media management, content writing);
- Article writing (journalism-style article writing);
- Editing and proofreading (I have development editing and proofreading experience and have worked with many authors. I offer everything from intensive manuscript development editing to proofreading and basic editing and reviews);
- Graphic design (design, visualization, vector, typesetting and layout);
- Print coordination and contractual publishing;
- Academic writing (Term papers, text books etc);
- Journalism/News writing;
- Screenplays and drama;
- Error correction for grammar, punctuation, typos and spelling errors;
- Textual Analysis of soundness of structure, transitions and cohesiveness of composition.

Recent assignments have included:

\*comprehensive editing, rewriting, or ghostwriting investment guides, medical /health and wellness book, tech books, and works of fiction

- \*academic or business-related original research and writing
- \*white papers for businesses, thinktanks, and tech companies
- \*writing e-books or e-guides for local businesses and NGOs
- \*copywriting for commercial clients including website content and press releases

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

International Diploma in Creative Writing by correspondence

**The Writing School**, Kings Road, London, 1988 - 1991

Bachelor of Arts Graphic Design & Communication

**University of Nairobi**, 2003 – 2005

Diploma in Business Management

**Kenya Institute of Management**, 1998

Additional areas of study:

Diploma Graphic Design, Print Design, Communication

**Kenya Polytechnic**, 1990 – 1992

Languages Proficiency:

British (Commonwealth) English, American English, DhoLuo, Kiswahili and Lingala

## SOFTWARE MASTERY:

I possess practical working mastery of top-of-the-range design programs. I like to create layout in InDesign and graphic design in CorelDRAW. I can use Illustrator or Quark if necessary. However, I usually use CorelDRAW to draw and Illustrator to create design. I prefer CorelDRAW and normally work faster and achieve a lot with it. Photoshop is my preferred image editor and InDesign is my favourite page layout designer.

- I can use almost every famous publishing program or I can learn a new one very fast, if it is not in my list.
- I am at home both on PC and on Mac, but I prefer PC, even though I have more experience with Mac.

## WORK EXPERIENCE:

### **Currently:**

#### **Executive Director, Communications Department**

Newlife Seventh-day Adventist Church, 5th Ngong Ave., Nairobi, Kenya

[www.newlifedananairobi.org](http://www.newlifedananairobi.org)

August 1992 – Present (24 years)

**Author** \*Freelance writer and designer @[www.okangaooko.com](http://www.okangaooko.com) Nairobi, Kenya

novelist, short story author, ghostwriter and script writer, journalist

January 2012 – September 2015, Nairobi, Kenya

Freelance English Tutor

Tutored high school students and foreigners from Francophone countries three times a week.

February 2012 – December 2014

Lead consultant

**Lake Victoria Writers' Group**, Kisumu, Kenya

#### **English coach, writer, graphic arts instructor and creative writing consultant**

Coached new writers • Consulted with authors and publishers on the development of book-length manuscripts • Published short, creative prose and poetry in numerous magazines and online venues.

January 2006 - September 2010

**Senior Designer - Mashariki Brand Communication Ltd.**, Nairobi, Kenya

- Consulted with authors and publishers on the development and publishing of more than 100 book-length manuscripts.
- Conceptualized, designed book covers, did typesetting and book/magazine layouts, wrote, illustrated and published nine original books as the sole ghostwriter.
- Worked for many organizations documenting case studies and writing mission statements, company profiles and conducting research studies.
- Managed corporate accounts.

- Led marketing efforts such as direct mail campaigns, in-store promotions, and surveys.
- Performed all lead roles in creative services and marketing for the agency.
- Performed key role in the design and production of print, identity, packaging, multimedia, web design and web applications.
- Managed press checks, art directed photos, supervised design teams .
- Maintained production schedules and budgets.
- Trained, supervised and provided art direction for junior designers.
- Managed multiple, concurrent projects in different stages.
- Designed information architecture and user interface for on-screen applications.

October 2000 – Present (17 years)

Freelance Writer, Owner, and President

**Oba Kunta Octopus**, Nairobi, Kenya [www.obakunta.co.ke](http://www.obakunta.co.ke)

Oba Kunta Octopus is Kenya's creative, branding and marketing communications agency. The company provides writing, editing and publishing services to students, advertising agencies, institutions of higher learning, churches, radio stations, politicians, medical practitioners, NGOs, government agencies, county governments, authors, publishers, self publishers, and web designers. I build and maintain marketing information intended to raise the company's profile as a creative and marketing agency.

Summary of Responsibilities:

- I assist fellow writers, authors, students, lecturers and storytellers to polish their work to its brightest shine.
- I offer writing, editing, proofreading, eBook conversion & distribution, contractual publishing services to writers, publishers, students and companies.
- I create coursework for online and classroom instruction in English.
- I manage all aspects of print and digital book publication, including design, pre-press preparation, and quality control.
- I act as a print broker and project manager for publishers, self-publishers, and literary magazines.

2000 : Design Consultant

**FIT Resources Ltd.**

Taught multiple product design courses for middle metalworking industries and designed products for small scale food processors and successfully transferred the technology to the informal sector via existing informal linkages.

1999 - 2000 : Product Design Consultant

**Technoserve Inc.**

Directed a team of designers, development workers and small scale traders in the design and participatory development of mobile food carts that were later licenced by the Nairobi City Council as mobile food kiosks to try and solve the lack of operating premises by Small and Micro Enterprise (SME )traders.

1998 : Creative Consultant

**FIT Uganda Ltd.**

Actively participated in the complete redesign of all presentation, print and web based communications for an ambitious internet-based development project. Imparted product design skills to Uganda Manufacturers Association.

1994 - 1998 : Private Tuition for Various Nairobi Schools

Academic co-advisor to high schools: taught writing and design skills and taught English to foreign students.

1993 - 1997 : Product designer

**Undugu Society of Kenya**

Worked mainly as product designer in the design and production of furniture and small functional farming and low-cost house building machines and implements for the benefit of micro and small scale manufacturers.

Accomplished a major research project and published **Scrap Metal Recycling: A Product Development Study of Shauri Moyo - Kamukunji Jua Kali** in 1995.

Summary of Responsibilities:

1. **Technology transfer for development.** I identified relevant low cost sustainable "**proven**" technologies developed by other organisations in Africa and other



developing countries. We adapted and transferred these technologies to the needy communities in various parts of Kenya.

2. **Product design and development** is an integral part of any technology development process. We worked from ideas to create designs, adapt and modify technologies to make them suitable to the needs of our target users. Creative thinking was an asset in the technology development team.

4. **Technology services to other projects.** We helped provide high-quality housing and community amenities for low-income people. We also ensured that this was done using environmentally-sustainable methods.

- 125 new products were developed in metal and wood.
- Informal sector artisans and craft producers were trained.
- I did extensive research studies on scrap metal recycling and informal metal working systems.
- I increased informal artisans confidence in NGO workers by 25% during my period of employment through increased transparency and more effective and streamlined communication between Undugu and informal sector management.

### Summary of Experiences:

- Novelist, author, short story writer.
- Editor and proofreader.
- Writer (ghostwriter, technical writer, biographer etc.) and occasional journalist.
- Graphic designer: design typesetting, visualizing, digital imaging, vector graphics.
- Creative director and brand manager in advertising.
- Product designer and development worker.
- Artist, visualizer and illustrator.
- Web designer and blog designer.
- Other experiences include but not limited to: extensive, ebook conversion, publishing (in Kindle format) and distribution.

### PUBLICATIONS/ WORKS:

*Currently*                      Working on **You Can't Polish This Turd**, *political novel*.

*February 2018*                **When You Sing To the Fishes** , *novel*.

- February 2018 **Kisumu**, *novel*.
- January 2017 **Happy 9th Birthday**, *horror novella*.
- June 2017 **Tandawuoya**, *novel*.
- January 2016 **Business Woman's Fault**, *seven short stories*.
- June 2013 **Kiss Ya Bangongi**, *short story*.
- July 2011 **Sheer Madness Here In Nairobi**, *short story*.
- July 2009 **First and Second Rhythm Guitars in an Old Benga Song**, *novella*.
- October 2006 **Why No One Knows Where Death Lives**, Papyrus Artists Organisation, *kids short story, audio podcast*.
- 2005 **Infinity: Eulogy for my late friend Martin Owino**, Hawi Magazine Volume I, Lake Victoria Writers' Group, *poem*.
- August 2004 **Moni Afinda**, Published in Eve Magazine, *short story*.
- June 2004 **Innocents Longings, Dangerous Fulfilement**, First published in [www.voicenet.org](http://www.voicenet.org), *poem*.
- May 2002 **The Proposal**, Published in Black Voices Online, *short story*.
- 2001 **Adventurer**, Published in Lady magazine, *short story*.
- 1998 **Pollution Control of Small –Scale Metal Industries In Nairobi**, Final Report of Small–scale Metal Industries Environmental Pollution In Kenya, *research study for International Labour Organisation (ILO)*.
- May 1997 **Scrap Metal Recycling**, *a product development study of Kamukunji Jua Kali Sector*, the Undugu Society of Kenya, *research paper and working document*.
- May 1995 **Kichorochoro**, Published in Flash, newsletter of the Undugu Society, issue no 55, *short story*.

September 1993     **Now The Sun Doesn't Shine: an AIDS allegory with ritual drama,**  
*Play.* First performed by Kenya Polytechnic Drama Club, Oct 1993.

#### CERTIFICATES AND AWARDS:

- Afro-Fusion Horror Society Award for **Happy 9th Birthday**
- 10 Certificates of Achievement for completion of continuing education courses
- 5 Blogger Achievement Certifications
- Certificate of Distinction, Kenya Polytechnic, 1998
- 14 exams passed for Best Designer Certifications

#### REFEREES:

1. Dr. Steve Mogere, AUTHOR AND INFRASTRUCTURE & EVALUATION ADVISOR  
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