



Okang'a Ooko

Novelist, Artist, Writer & Designer

Curriculum Vitae, 2019

BIO & CONTACTS:

ooko@okangaooko.com/ ooko@obakunta.co.ke/ URL: okangaooko.com / ph: +254 722 493 896
50yrs; Married to Betty (nurse); 4 kids; lives in Nairobi; plays guitar; loves old Congolese rumba.

OTHER INTERESTS: Product design, 3D graphics (especially I enjoy Maya), hand drawing, painting, vector graphics. I do pastels, acrylics 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, Ludlum, Orwell, Oyono, LaGuma, Dickens, Ishiguro, Forsythe, Hemmingway, Ongogo and Bitek.

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

I am an artist, designer, author and a creative freelance writer with over twenty years experience in the industry working in print and online media, looking for exciting new writing projects. I am a novelist, short story author and writer with work appearing in various print venues. Mostly I write feature articles and the like for African publications, periodicals. I also write company profiles and create content for websites. I am a trained graphic designer with 20+ years experience and 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 has published three books with a major Nairobi City publishing house. I am a talented and versatile writer, proficient in technical communications. I am

also an artist and a graphic designer (design, layout, print). I have successfully generated hundreds of business print and electronic materials, including books, reports, corporate identity, proposals, presentations, press releases, memos, reviews, and manuals. I have authored first-rate essays and articles for publication in print, and online venues. I am an enthusiastic and creative customer-focused writer, adept at details, and producing only 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 5 books (Kindle and print) on Amazon 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 freelance and development editor for hundreds of clients in a wide variety of writing genres, categories and styles, including fiction, non-fiction, essay, poetry, technical, film/theater scripts, memoir, inspirational, Christian, academic textbooks, autobiography, critique, law, business, scientific, software documentation, and more. I have worked for newspapers and magazines as a writer, editor and copyeditor. I mentor 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 an artist and professionally trained as graphic designer. With enough experience in corporate business management, I have worked as a business manager in the dynamic and restless Nairobi corporate branding and advertising reality. My company, 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 and development. I have worked in Kenya with Undugu Society, and with Housing and Building Research Institute, University of Nairobi in Association with Wageningen University, Holland. Later I worked with ILO, FIT Resources, FIT Uganda Ltd. and Technoserve. I co-founded FIT Resources Ltd as a development consultancy firm through which I effectively implemented product design and technology consultancies.

My real experience in graphic design for print started when I realised, after working for many years as product designer, that graphic design and computers is what I naturally loved and where I achieved more excellence. As a professionally trained graphic

designer for print and electronic publishing, I have extensive experience in the art of visual communications and I have wide recognition as an expert in creative graphics arts leading me to taking positions at creative agencies as Senior Graphic Designer (Marketpower International), Art Director (Mashariki Design), Creative Director (Oba Kunta Octopus) and Communications Director (Newlife SDA Church). I am a creative person and I have skillfully created and produced graphics and layout for print materials such as books, newsletters, brochures, flyers and reports. I have created smart graphics for websites, advertising, marketing and promotion, and brand development.

For years I have been known and seen, and best regarded as a good designer. I have worked professionally as 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."

"Wonderful and a great editor. Would recommend."

"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."

OVERVIEW OF SKILLS:

Experienced writer, editor, proofreader, and designer with a long, successful career in publishing. 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 especially mindful of grammar and punctuation. I offer honest, original and high-quality work on time according to your 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 (Instructional guidebooks, inspirational books, reports, company profile, company mission statements, business plans, ad copy, short product description 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 extensive editing, development editing and proofreading experience and have worked with acclaimed authors. I offer everything from intensive manuscript reviews to development editing to proofreading and basic editing.);
- Graphic design (typesetting and page layout);
- Cover design;
- Print coordination and contractual publishing;
- Academic writing (Term papers, text books etc);
- Journalism/News writing;
- Screenplays;
- 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, 3vtech books, and 2 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 global businesses and NGOs

*copywriting for commercial clients including website content and press releases

EDUCATION:

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 a lot of design programs and I do not want to stop. I like to create layout and graphic design in CorelDRAW. I can use Illustrator or FreeHand, Quark and Flash 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 just CorelDRAW. Photoshop is my preferred image editor as InDesign is my favourite page layout designer.

- I can use almost every famous publishing program (Freehand, Quark, InDesign etc.), 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

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

www.newlifedananairobi.org

August 1992 – Present (24 years)

Author @www.okangaooko.com Nairobi, Kenya

novelist, short story author, ghostwriter and script writer

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, writing, and graphical arts instructor • Creative Writing Consultation and Workshopping • 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 Editor & Designer - Mashariki Brand Communication Ltd.

• Consulted with authors and publishers on the development 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
- Leads marketing efforts such as direct mail campaigns, in-store promotions, and surveys
- Performs all lead roles as in creative services, branding and marketing head for the agency
- Performed lead role in the design and production of print, identity, packaging, multimedia, web design and web applications
- Manages press checks, art directed photos, supervises team design efforts
- 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 www.obakunta.co.ke

Oba Kunta Octopus is Kenya's creative, branding and marketing communications agency. I build and maintains marketing information intended to raise the company's profile as a creative and marketing agency. I also write product descriptions and copy. Provide a wide range of writing services to various clients, businesses, publications, and websites, including: resumes and cover letters, chapter summaries, articles, writing prompts, press releases, how-to articles, and presentations.

Summary of Responsibilities:

- Assists fellow writers, authors, students, academics and storytellers to polish their work to its brightest shine.

- Offer writing, editing, proofreading, eBook conversion & distribution, contractual publishing services to writers, publishers, students and companies
- Develop, edit and maintain a corporate Intranet to enhance software support reference and efficiency.
- Create coursework for online and classroom instruction in English, writing and digital imaging.
- Manage all aspects of print and digital book publication, including design, pre-press preparation, and quality control.
- Acts 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 : Product Design Consultant

Technoserve Inc

Directed a team of designers and project assistants 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 SME traders.

1998 : Creative Consultant

FIT Uganda Ltd.

Managed a small staff and 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 supervised students.

1993 - 1997 : Product designer

Undugu Society of Kenya

Worked mainly as product designer in the design & production of furniture and small functional farming and low-cost house building machines & 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.
- Trained informal sector artisans and craft producers.
- 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.

Additional Experience:

- Advertising director and brand manager
- Product designer
- Artist and Illustrator

- Social media consultant manager
- Graphic designer: book typesetter and page layout designer and cover designer
- Marketing consultant
- Web designer and blog designer
- Other experience: extensive, ebook conversion, publishing (in Kindle format) and distribution.

PUBLICATIONS:

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|---------------------|---|
| <i>Currently</i> | Working on Hunter & Gatherer , <i>political novel</i> |
| <i>Currently</i> | Working on Tandawuoya , <i>novel</i> |
| <i>April 2019</i> | When You Sing To The Fishes , <i>novel</i> |
| <i>January 2018</i> | Kisumu , <i>novel</i> |
| <i>June 2017</i> | Businesswoman's Fault , <i>7 stories</i> |
| <i>January 2016</i> | Happy 9th Birthday , <i>horror novella</i> |
| <i>June 2013</i> | Kiss Ya Bangongi , <i>short story</i> |
| <i>July 2011</i> | Rude Awakening , <i>short story</i> |
| <i>July 2009</i> | First and Second Rhythm Guitars in an Old Benga Song , <i>novella</i> |
| <i>October 2006</i> | Why No One Knows Where Death Lives , Papyrus Artists Organisation, <i>kids short story, audio podcast</i> |
| <i>2005</i> | Infinity: Eulogy for my late friend Martin Owino , Hawi Magazine Volume I, Lake Victoria Writers' Group, <i>poem</i> |
| <i>August 2004</i> | Moni Afinda , Published in Eve Magazine, <i>short story</i> |
| <i>June 2004</i> | Innocents Longings, Dangerous Fulfilment , First published in www.voicenet.org , <i>poem</i> |

- 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 **Kichorocho**, 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