



We at ADIBF caught up with Lynette Owen recently and here is what she had to say:

1. You have recently been involved in the Publishers Training programme in Abu Dhabi organised by KITAB – give us a background on the Publishers Training and its aims.

My understanding is that the programme aims to provide practical training on all the basic aspects of the publishing process, from editorial list-building, project management, design and production through to marketing and sales. My own session, aimed at the mid-management level, was on copyright, which of course underpins not only the basic relationship between author and publisher but also the onward licensing of intellectual property rights.

2. In light of KITAB's aim to professionalise the publishing industry, what do you see as being the main areas to focus on and develop in the coming months?

I would say, from my own encounters with Arab World publishers this week, and at the 2008 and 2009 book fairs, that there are varying levels of experience amongst the publishers. Some businesses have been established for longer and are more extensive, operating in a number of countries in the region, whilst others are relatively new and smaller businesses, with relatively limited experience of dealing in the international market. I believe that it is extremely important to provide the industry with an overview of the publishing processes from an outside perspective, although it does of course have to be tailored for local circumstances.

3. Where would you identify that progress has already been made in the professionalization of the Arab publishing sector?

The area of copyright is particularly significant as some countries in the region have only recently become signatories to the international copyright conventions, which are the framework for copyright trading between countries. There has also been a significant amount of piracy in the region - both full-scale commercial piracy and through unauthorised photocopying - which affects not only the interests of foreign copyright holders but of local publishers as well. We hope that the training programme and the Spotlight on Rights initiative, which provides the possibility of subsidies for the legal sale and purchase of rights, will encourage the flow of intellectual property in both directions and that applications for rights will be made in the proper way so that trading partnerships can be established. The response which we received to the programme at the 2009 Abu Dhabi book fair was really encouraging and we hope to build on this in 2010 and beyond.

4. You will be speaking at next year's IPA Copyright Symposium on the eve of the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair in March 2010 - could you tell us more about your involvement?

I have spoken on copyright and licensing topics at previous symposia and also at the IPA Congress, held every four years. In 2010, I will be a member of the panel addressing the topic of Copyright in Action: International Copyright Licensing, and together with fellow speakers, the literary agent Andrew Nurnberg and Bachar Chebaro of Arab Scientific Publishers, we hope to give a practical overview of licensing activities and also address some of the copyright challenges in the region, from our differing perspectives.