Alliance Française de Nairobi

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Translation, Language & Power Masterclass and Translation Slam

by Edwige Dro, writer and literary translator from Côte d'Ivoire

Fri. 8th May, Alliance Française de Nairobi, Multipurpose Room (3rd Floor)
2 – 5pm

Africa Forward Fest – *Connecting Minds, Shaping Future*

The **Alliance Française de Nairobi**, in partnership with **eKitabu**, will host the **5th edition of its annual literary festival**, now reimagined and expanded as the **Africa Forward Fest**.

Taking place in the lead-up to the **Africa Forward Summit,** held jointly by Kenya and France, this new pan-African format positions Nairobi as a key meeting point for writers, publishers, translators, educators, artists, and readers allowing stories, ideas, and identities to travel across borders, languages, and histories.

African literature is experiencing unprecedented creative energy and global visibility. Yet challenges remain in ensuring that stories circulate **across languages, markets, and audiences**. The Africa Forward Fest places these questions at its core.

What?

How do texts travel across languages? What gets lost, reshaped, or silenced in the process?

This masterclass will explore translation not only as a technical practice, but as a space where power, culture, and meaning are negotiated. Participants will engage closely with literary texts and reflect on the choices that shape how meaning moves across languages.

The focus of this two-hour masterclass will be on translation as a process, that is, how translation decisions are made.

Who?

We invite interested professionals or emerging literary translators working across French and English, students studying French literature, language or studying translation or interpretation, writers working across French and English, to apply for this literary translation masterclass.

The masterclass will be limited to 15 persons.

Facilitator

The masterclass will be facilitated by Edwige Dro, Edwige Dro, a writer, literary translator (English–French), and curator from Côte d'Ivoire. Her work enages translation as both a literary practice and a critical site where questions of language, power, and circulation are negotiated.

She has translated works across genres and works closely on the movement of texts between African, European, and global literary spaces. Her writing and translations have appeared across Africa, the UK, and North America.

Edwige has served on juries for the Caine Prize for African Writing and the PEN International Short Story Prize, and sits on advisory boards including the PEN/HEIM Translation Fund, Culturescapes, and the African Book Festival.

She is the founder of 1949: the Library of Women's Writings from Africa and the Black World, a feminist literary space in Abidjan dedicated to the circulation and interpretation of African and Black women's texts.

Submission requirements

- A short bio of (150 words max)
- A motivation letter as to why you want to take part in this masterclass
- A short translation exercise (see below)

Translate this short extract into English:

Um cria les derniers mots, la foule se leva et l'acclama avec enthousiasme. Esta sentit son coeur vibrer au diapason de celui de ses voisins. il ne leur avait pas fait l'injure de négliger leur intelligence. Il n'était pas venu leur imposer une ligne de conduite. Il expliquait, prenait le temps, donnait des détails, traduisait pour eux les textes des Nations Unies, il leur expliquait l'organisation du monde des Blancs, cette nébuleuse dont ils subissaient le joug sans en comprendre le sens, tout cela en bassa, en leur langue. L'homme s'adressait à leur coeur, et aussi à leur raison, faisant confiance à leur intelligence. Et ils l'entendaient. Oh oui, ils l'entendaient !

(*Excerpt from Les maquisards by Hemley Boum*)

"The above excerpt is used for educational purposes as part of the selection process for a literary translation masterclass."

Apply here

https://bit.ly/TranslationMasterclass

Application Deadline

- Deadline for application is 24th April 2026

Candidates announced

- Selected candidate will be announced on 30th April 2026

Translation Slam

At the end of the masterclass, a public translation slam will take place. Translation slams are live sessions where multiple translations of the same text are presented, compared, and discussed.

Would you be interested in taking part?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, you will receive a short literary text (in French) in advance and you will be invited to prepare your translation ahead of the session. During the slam, you will present and discuss your choices, thus opening a conversation on interpretation, voice, and meaning.

The purpose of the translation slam is to show that there is no one translation.