

AN IMPACT STUDY OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (SLDP) IN PALLISA DISTRICT, UGANDA

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1. Introduction

Education can fundamentally be developed through a process of providing knowledge, skill or competences to a learner or learners through optimal utilization of libraries and information services. Access to school libraries have the most potential in improving learning achievements and gains which in turn would influence the learner's quality of life in later years and their contributions to the national aspirations. Uganda aspires to eradicate poverty through several strategies including Universal Primary Education (UPE). The UPE strategy started being implemented in 1997 and scored several positives especially in terms of increasing the school enrollments. There are still major challenges facing UPE including quality issues, drop out rates and limited access to books especially supplementary readers. The limited exposure to supplementary readers has had grave consequences on the pupils' performance in national exams as studies by the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) and the Education Standards Agency (ESA) found out, a majority of the pupils fail because they can not read and interpret the examination question.

The centrality of school libraries and their development to facilitate delivery of quality education has been on Uganda's national educational agenda for many years including as far back as 1963 in the Castle Report of the Uganda Educational Commission, the 1975 Ministry of Education Library Committee, the 1977 Standing Committee of Public Libraries Board, and 1978 UNESCO study on development of school libraries (Magara and Bukirwa, 2004:316). In latter years several legal and policy frameworks including: the Government White paper on education 1992 which provides guidelines on the need for libraries and their utilisation in schools and communities, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) Guidelines which advocate for writers/readers clubs in schools, and the National Textbook Policy 1997. Other initiatives to guarantee access to textbooks and other learning materials have included procurement programmes such as the Decentralized Instruction Materials Procurement (DIMP) programme which handed schools the opportunity to select titles of both textbooks and supplementary readers to buy for the school as well as spread bookshops to all districts in Uganda. And recently government introduced the use of mother tongue for instruction in the first three years of basic primary education.

It is clear from the above exposition that Uganda's education system is very rich in terms of policy and legal frameworks. However school library development in Uganda continues to suffer under funding, neglect and lack of a school library specific policy. Magara and Bukirwa (2004) in a study on School Library Development in Uganda provided a blueprint for developing school libraries and information services. Some of the recommendations of the study have been incorporated into the draft School Library Development (SLD) Policy by the Ministry of Education and Sports (2005). The Vision of the SLD policy is "a Uganda where national development is enhanced through lifelong learning and an information literate society capable of harnessing the environment around them" (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2005:7).

1.1.2 Background

In order to contribute to the development of a reading culture in the region, the East African Book Development Association (EABDA) through its national chapters in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda provided various programmes including the School Library Development

Programme (Magara and Batambuze, 2005). In Uganda, the National Chapter is the National Book Trust of Uganda (NABOTU) founded in 1997 as a civil society organisation to promote authorship, publishing and the development of a reading culture. NABOTU's current membership includes associations and institutions of authors, publishers, booksellers, librarians and many others.

NABOTU started implementing the School Library Development programme in 2001. This programme was developed out of a realisation that most primary schools in Uganda lacked libraries; had very limited collections of supplementary readers and; teachers lacked skills to teach reading, promote reading and manage books well in the schools. The programme's target were both rural and urban poor schools providing them with children's storybooks and skills for the teachers in teaching reading methods, promoting reading and starting and running school libraries. The collections of storybooks donated include: books locally published and procured using grants from EABDA, Sida, Pearson-Longman (UK) publishers and Book Aid International. The emphasis on storybooks is largely because they have the most potential for encouraging a reading habit and culture compared to school textbooks. Additionally Book Aid International supported the programme through direct children's book donations from UK based publishers and libraries.

In 2006, the School Library Development Project was conducted in the district of Pallisa in Eastern Uganda by 2 members of NABOTU who included: the Uganda Library and Information Association (ULIA) and the National Library of Uganda (NLU). The selection of Pallisa was based on a number of indicators including high levels of poverty and poor results in the national Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) over four successive years. Pallisa District Education Officer (DEO) guided the NABOTU teams in identifying schools to benefit from this intervention. The ULIA (2006) report further indicates that the criteria for selection of schools was disadvantaged schools that were willing to establish a library and reading programme to benefit learners. The schools selected were from the four counties of Budaka, Pallisa, Kibuku and Tirinyi that make up Pallisa district.

A workshop was organised by the Uganda Library and Information Association (ULIA) targeting teacher librarians from 50 primary schools that benefited from the book donations. Several studies on literacy practices in primary schools in Uganda had concluded that teachers were not well versed with teaching reading methods, reading promotion and management of libraries. These findings are corroborated by the Ministry of Education and Sports own findings which show further that most teachers do not know how to use textbooks during instruction. Training teachers in the key skills of starting and managing school libraries, promoting reading to children, assessing the impact of books on pupils and teaching children to read was thus a key strategy for guaranteeing the success of NABOTU's School Library Development Programme.

The National Library of Uganda on the other hand handled the procurement of appropriate children's storybooks for donation to the schools. Some of the issues that were taken into account while selecting books included: languages i.e. both English and the local languages in which instruction takes place, special themes such as HIV/AIDS, gender issues and price. A major concern though was the anticipated short shelf life for the books as a result of over use and also because all locally published children's storybooks are paperbacks. The consolation though was that signs of early wear and tear as a result of use would be a good indication that the thirst and interest for well written and interesting storybooks in the schools was quite real. It was thought that this would also dispel the notion that school teachers in Uganda keep books away from children. With average enrolments in the schools standing at about 1000, the National Library of Uganda provided a total of 240 storybooks to every school. The

assumption was that every child in the school would be able to read most of the storybooks as the teachers circulate them. It was also hoped that schools would be encouraged to source for additional storybooks from government in order to meet the increasing demand from children.

1.2 The Impact study

The impact study of the Pallisa School Library Development project is a culmination of NABOTU winning the IFLA Guust van Wessemael Literacy Prize 2007. It was proposed that using the prize money, a study on the impact of the project would be carried out. Thus the purpose of this study was to establish the impact of the School Library Development Project on the beneficiary schools in Pallisa District. The study delved into the extent to which the objectives of the project had been achieved. The study established whether or not:

- a) The teacher training carried out by ULIA had helped teachers to improve on how they were teaching and promoting reading and whether teachers through their peer networks were training others.
- b) Storybooks donated were being read, interesting, relevant, of the right quality and quantities.
- c) There were any efforts regarding promotion of reading in schools
- d) There were any challenges hindering further school library development by the schools themselves.

The study further sought to establish how the reading time on the school time table was being influenced by the programme. It was proposed that the results, and lessons learned as a result of this study would be widely shared with both local and the international school library community.

2. Methodology

A field survey was later carried out in a representative sample of 20 out of the 50 primary schools that had benefited from the Pallisa School Library Development project. The table below shows the names of the schools visited during the field survey:

Table 1: Schools Visited

Sub county	No of Schools	Schools
Pallisa District		
Agule	1	Odusai P/S
Bulangira	1	Goli-Goli P/S
Buseta	1	Katiryo P/S
Butebo	1	Kalalaka P/S
Gogonyo	1	Gogonyo P/S
Kabwangasi	3	Nesenyi P/S, Kabwangasi P/S and Kabwangasi Demo.
Kakoro	1	Kanginama
Kibale	1	Kibale P/S
Puti-Puti	2	Limoto P/S and Odepai P/S
Tirinya	1	Tirinya P/S
Town Council	3	Pallisa Township, Nalufuya P/S & Kagoli P/S
Budaka District		
Iki-Iki	2	Iki-Iki P/S Integrated and Katira P/S
Kamunkoli	2	Kamunkoli P/S, and Kadimunkoli P/S
Total	20	

The field survey targeted teachers, children, head teachers, teacher librarians and the District Education Office. Data was collected from teacher librarians and head teachers using a structured interview guide. In some schools, where teacher librarians were not present, other teachers were selected. In two schools, focus group discussions among the teachers were used to enlist what could not have been covered by the interviews. In 18 schools, children were talked to as a class and an interview group guide was administered to selected classes as recommended by the schools' administration. The numbers in these classes varied from school to school. In only two schools i.e. Nalufunya and Pallisa Township primary schools, a few pupils were selected based on responsibilities in the school and interviewed in groups of 6 pupils.

The research team also undertook literature reviews that included field reports, newspaper and journal articles and books on the subject of development school librarianship as well as best practices on library development from around the world and within government which provided parameters for the evaluation of the current practices in Uganda and Pallisa in particular. In addition, structured interviews were carried out with implementers of the activities. During the process of data collection, contact with Pallisa District Education Office, NABOTU, NLU and ULIA who were involved in implementation of the project was done to determine important parameters for the study.

3. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings are based on the parameters that the study set out to establish which are in turn based on the objectives of the Pallisa School Library Development project. Thus this gives the extent to which they have been achieved, the reasons for variations and any other information as well as observations from the schools.

3.1 Impact of Teacher Training

Teachers were trained in teaching reading methods, promotion of reading and managing library collections. Through interviews and observations, this study attempted to find out the extent to which the teacher training carried out by ULIA had helped teachers to improve on how they were teaching and promoting reading and whether teachers through their peer networks were training others. Below are some of the findings:

3.1.1 Organised Libraries: Prior to the training some of the schools had rooms used as libraries. According to the testimonies of teachers, there was no particular order in which books were organised and used. Teacher librarians who participated in the training from schools such as Pallisa Township had according to the head teacher and our own observations, good book displays to facilitate children's access to books and also used the subject classification to arrange shelf displays. However, as the head teacher expressed, since the teacher librarian left shortly afterwards, very little efforts have been further made. In some schools, due to lack of shelves, books are taken from office to the library room and displayed on tables where children pick and read. For example in Katoryo P/S, a library room has been provided. Although it had no shutters in the windows, the teacher librarian devised a programme where each morning books get moved from the office to be displayed in the library room. In Gogonyo P/S, the teacher librarian is reported to have influenced school management to acquire more storage facilities for the library. In Odepa P/S, the young talk club has supplied the school with additional reading materials which the teacher librarian ensures that all children access. In Limoto P/S, after the training, the books were transferred from the cupboard

in head teacher's office to a separate room where they were being easily accessed by children.



A Teacher Librarian in one of the Schools showing how he is utilising the Desks in displaying books

In addition the teacher librarian after realising that there was no money to buy furniture and could not keep the books on the ground, improvised an idea of using the available desks to display the books.

The study further indicated that following the training a consciousness on the need for school libraries was aroused amongst teacher librarians who in turn influenced school management to take certain decisions. For example in Odepa P/S, they have requested for a new building to house the school library from the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF). In Iki-Iki P/S, a request for a separate place for a library was made to the District. This was after realising that currently books are kept with other school items that have enabled termites to destroy most of the books. In Masenyi P/S, they had a plan of calling upon the parents to provide more shelves. Furthermore, the head teacher confirmed that the District authorities were planning to build them a Library.

3.1.2 Skills transfer: Most schools recognised the importance of having more than one teacher with skills to teach and promote reading as well as manage school libraries. The recognition arose out of the awareness that teacher transfers affecting teacher librarians as well were a common threat to all schools. Findings of the study reveal that teacher librarians that had participated in the training were instrumental in organising briefing sessions where all teachers and the head teacher participated. The result was that in schools such as Katiryo primary school not only was a new culture of opening up a library brought to the school, but the initiative was equally supported by all the teachers.

In some schools such as Kalalaka P/S, Kamunkoli Mixed P/S, Masenyi P/S and Kanginima, following the training manual, the teacher librarians identified and trained other teachers. It was however observed that not all the teachers were as enthusiastic about reading promotion because to them this was tedious work to do in addition to their teaching responsibilities. This pointed to a need to find out motivational factors that will assist most teachers to get involved in reading promotion.

In most cases however there were shining examples of collaboration between teachers in terms of reading promotion as well as sharing responsibility for proper usage of books.

Teachers generally ensured that books were collected and supervised when in use. For instance, in Goli-Goli P/S, simple explanations on how to arrange a library, issue books and replace them were done by the teacher librarian. In a focus group discussion conducted among the teachers in Kitara P/S, participants indicated that when the teacher librarian is not available, he instructs the teachers on duty to take on the responsibilities. The role of transfer of skills is important as specified by the Rubrics on the duties of a library teacher/teacher librarian to teach other teachers and pupils in the use of library and resources (MSLMA, 2003). Equally the School Library Manifesto (IFLA, 2006) stresses the important role that the teacher librarian plays in ensuring that crucial skills for enabling access to reading materials are grasped by most teachers in a school.

3.1.3 Reading Skills: An assessment of new skills learnt by pupils in the use of books was done. Most pupils cited that they now knew how to make use of a contents page. A group interview with children of Pallisa Town P/S, indicated knowledge on how to use table of contents and references in the books. In other schools only library prefects said they knew how to borrow books from the library. Pupils also knew how to use labels on books. In some schools, identification of books on shelves/browsing through the shelves was possible. In others, like in Katira P/S, “you read what the teacher tells you”, one pupil mentioned. This is mostly done when a teacher tells pupils during classroom exercises to use particular books.

Other children indicated that they knew how to retrieve books from open shelves. Some children indicated that they had gained skills in caring for books so that they are not torn and safeguarding books against theft. In one school, one child indicated that the Librarian stops them from going to the library/office. However, teachers teach [them] how to read and use table of contents. The standards by MSLMA (2003) provide the role of the class teacher to include helping pupils become skilled users of information. Indeed, the development of information literacy skill is an inbuilt strategy in the SLD Policy (MoES, 2006), a strategy that is embraced by many educational services including the whole-school information literacy by the Directorate of Education, Library, Information and Technology Services (2003) in Kwazulu Natal. It was noted that it would be necessary in the future to help teachers so that they can take children through a whole range of reading skills to aid both intensive and extensive reading.

3.2 Usage of Storybooks donated: The study assessed whether storybooks donated were being read, interesting, relevant, of the right quality and quantities. Findings indicated that the books donated had been significantly utilised. Interviews with children from different schools showed very high interest in reading. In some cases children testified to jostling over the limited copies of books. It was clear from the interviews that children had improved on reading skills and could read very well. For instance in Katira and Goli Goli, responses indicated that pupils were easily accessing books and this had enabled them to develop interest in reading and use of library. The research team observed a common trend where the less restrictive the book usage/library rules, the more the children used the books. Schools that permitted usage of the storybooks are reported to have started reaping benefits. For example Teachers from Katira and Goli Goli confirmed that as a result of reading, school children had gradually developed better abilities in comprehension and interpretation of what is being read. In Pallisa Township and Kabwangasi Demo, teachers partly attributed good results in the English examinations during the primary leaving examinations (PLE) in 2007 to the use of story books donated. It was also noted that in some schools, pupils could demand to read these books on their own. In other schools teachers indicated that children could write when you dictate, and in other circumstances, they could come out with a readable sentence, which was not happening before the exposure to storybooks.

The study went further to explore circumstances under which usage of the storybooks happened. The following findings were made:

- **Use during class time:** In schools such as Iki Iki, Odepai, and Limoto storybooks were being read during class time. Children were not allowed to borrow storybooks because of the limited numbers. However they were allowed to borrow textbooks for use at home. In Goli-Goli P/S, the school timetable caters for a library period for every class Primary one to seven while in another school Kamonkoli P/S, the school timetable caters for reading lessons for P1-3.
- **Take books home:** In other schools like Kanginima P/S, and Kadimunkoli P/S, children were allowed to take books home. This mostly applied to the day scholars who borrowed and took home books to read.
- **Free Time at School:** Some children read in their 'free time' e.g. during break and lunch times. In boarding schools such as Kabwangasi Demo, children borrowed books to take to the dormitories to read. In Odusai P/S, one pupil confirmed that they read under the tree, during reading lessons and at break times.
- **Borrowing Books for a Period:** It was noted that in some schools, children were allowed to borrow a book for some days or weeks. However, it was noted that borrowing is encouraged at the beginning of the term in the 1st – 5th weeks. Unfortunately in some schools, children were not able to access the books. A student confirmed that "in that year (2008), they had not started using the books in the school". Others lamented that "for the whole year, the books were in the head teacher's office".
- **Use the Library:** In a few circumstances, children confirmed that they went to the library and read there. However, some children admitted that there were few seats in the library where they can go and read. In some schools, library books were displayed and children are given the opportunity to choose.

The above comments show some significant contribution of SLDP to the development of a reading culture in schools. Indeed, IFLA maintains that library services must be accessible to all members of the school community (IFLA, 2006). It is clear from the above that several schools were trying different methods to facilitate access to storybooks, textbooks and other learning materials.

3.2.3 Relevancy of Books Donated

An inquiry was done to find out from teachers and teacher librarians on the relevancy of the storybooks that were donated by NLU. From the interviews, it was noted that books like the monitor readers (Monitor Books is a local publishing house) were favoured by teachers and teacher librarians. Some popular titles mentioned by children included the Great Chief, Gulu-Gulu, Don't play with Fire and the Greedy Old Man. Teachers judged most of the storybooks donated as relevant. Local language readers like Tkosio ka Oliso an Iteso Book were favoured by teachers. In all, readers help children to explore more in reading. In some schools, it was noted that pupils liked storybooks with pictures/illustrations and big letters. Furthermore, pupils appreciated books with diagrams. To test the memory of pupils on how best they read, it was necessary to ask them to indicate which titles of books in the schools they liked most. The following are some of the titles mentioned and the reasons why they were favoured:

- Don't Play with fire: Message on HIV/AIDS
- Gulu Gulu goes to School (8): Because it is available in the school
- Where is the Baby (5): It has a good story. It teaches him how to care for the babies. It also teaches him how to ask and answer questions.

- The Story of Njabanjabala: It teaches him how to avoid bad groups and teaches him how to behave a good way.
- Gipin and Labang (2): Because it teaches him about behaviour in society
- Kintu and Nambi (2): Because it is about the 1st Muganda. You learn the behaviour of early man.

The numbers e.g. 8 in brackets indicate the number of schools in which the title was favoured.

Other titles mentioned by children/pupils included:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How Chameleon got its colour • Juma the Hunter • Tambale and Mwaka • The Early Man • Musa and Emerald • A Town dog and Early Dog 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Talk: Teacher gives us • Angry Giant • New Born • Un certain • Ichuli and Hare • Nyamungu the Lazy Girl • Magulu and the Lion
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It was noted that some storybooks had difficult words hence the need for children's dictionaries. The books mentioned by teachers were also favoured by children, which explain the fact that teachers have an influence on what the children read.

3.2.4 Performance of Schools in PLE for 2006 and 2007

It was important to establish the performance of schools in the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) in the years 2006 and 2007 to assess whether the donation of books to schools and the training conducted could have had an impact directly or indirectly.

Table X: Performance of Schools in 2006 and 2007

School	Grade 1		II		III		IV		X		U	
	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Kagoli	3	0	19	18	13	15	8	3	3	3	3	3
Iki-Iki	0	0	5	32	10	3	8	1	1	0	7	1
Kamonkoli	1	4	54	72	-	17	-	8	-	1	-	6
Odusai	0	0	24	06	16	18	10	15	0	0	10	7
Nasenyi	-	1	-	37	-	NA	-	-	-	-	-	2
Kibale	1	1	41	31	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kanginima	1	1	48	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goli-Goli	2	1	72	53	3	15	-	4	-	-	-	-
Katira	0	0	25	30	12	17	4	9	3	-	1	-
Kabwangasi P/S	2	1	33	30	47	34	13	8	6	9	1	0
Kabwangasi Demo	1	2	57	56	11	17	4	1	4	2	1	2
GoGonyo P/S	0	0	24	19	25	28	11	28	5	62	3	14
Limoto	7	0	11	2	14	11	6	1	4	4	0	4
Odepa	0	0	19	5	9	15	12	9	-	7	-	-
Tirinya P/S	1	0	23	20	8	7	1	6	4	4	0	2
Katiryio	2	5	36	48	6	6	3	5	-	10	1	4
Kalalaka	0	0	2	6	8	5	9	8	9	2	29	13
Pallisa Township	0	1	44	26	15	02	03	02	02	02	02	01

A dash (-) represents not Available Information and 0 represents Zero in absolute terms.

When asked to comment on the performance in PLE of 2007 compared to that of 2006, head teachers or their deputies did not show any significant difference in the years. In a few schools like in Katira, Iki-Iki, and Kagoli there was improvement in performance. Those who

registered better performance in 2007, such as Kamonkoli, Katiryo, Iki-Iki and Kagoli cited reading in schools as a motivator to the year's performance. In Kamonkoli, there was better performance in 2007 compared to earlier years as reflected by 4 & 72 for grade I & II in 2007 compared to 1 and 54 for 2006. It is clear from the table above that many of the schools did not register improved performance in 2007. It is however clear that those schools that had embraced a strong reading program were making progressive improvements in performance.

Analysing the performance of the results of 12 schools where full results were available, against those of the district, as shown in the table XI

Table XI: Analysis of Performance in Selected Schools Compared to Overall District Performance for 2007

	Grade 1	II	III	IV	X	U	Total
Kagoli	0	18	15	3	3	3	42
Iki-Iki	0	32	3	1	0	1	37
Kamonkoli	4	72	17	8	1	6	108
Odusai	0	6	18	15	0	7	46
Kabwangasi P/S	1	30	34	8	9	0	82
Kabwangasi Demo	2	56	17	1	2	2	80
GoGonyo P/S	0	19	28	28	62	14	151
Limoto	0	2	11	1	4	4	22
Tirinya P/S	0	20	7	6	4	2	39
Katiryo	5	48	6	5	10	4	78
Kalalaka	0	6	5	8	2	13	34
Pallisa Township	1	26	2	2	2	1	34
Total	13	335	163	86	99	57	753
% of Grades in Schools	1.70%	44.50%	21.60%	11.40%	13.10%	7.60%	100%
Overall District Performance							
Total	105	2,223	1566	924	350	1,145	6313
% of Grades in district	1.7%	35.2%	24.8%	14.6%	5.6%	18.5%	100%

From the table above, the performance of the selected schools was not different from those of the overall District performance. For instance the grade one of the selected schools of 1.7% was the same as that of the district.

Views on the reason for the poor performance were diverse and included: massive transfers of teachers from one school to another which disrupted both teaching and learning, lack of lunch for the kids etc. No single school cited the high textbook to pupil ratios, limited supplementary readers in the school as having contributed to the failure. The research team was not surprised by this finding as it confirmed the fact that education in Uganda is more teacher centred with resources such as textbooks and storybooks playing a supportive role.

3.2.5 Schools Expenditure on Procurement of Reading Materials

When Head Teachers were asked to mention whether they had a budget for the procurement of reading materials, most of them said yes. However, many of them did not have actual figures they spend. Those who said no indicated that they received books through UPE and DIMP programme. Table IX below shows the expenditure on supplementary readers in 2007 in respective schools.

Table IX: Schools Expenditure on Procurement of Reading Materials

School	Expenditure on
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	Books (Uganda Shs)
Tirinyi P/S	240,000/=
Odepai P/S	180,000/=
Limoto P/S	194,675/=
Kagoli P/S	150,000/=
Kibale P/S	310,000/=
Odusai P/S	228,800/=
Gogonyo P/S	318,630/=
Iki-Iki P/S	300,000/=
Kabwangasi Demo Sc.	244,000/=
Kabwangasi P/S	270,000
Kadimunkoli P/S	400,000/=
Average	270,000

The enrolment population has a significant influence on the expenditure on books. For those schools that provided enrolment data, like Odepai (729), Odusai (897), Iki-Iki (1004), their expenditure correspond to the expenditure on books as 180,000/=; 228,800/=; and 300,000/= respectively. In most of these schools, the budget mentioned was specifically for supplementary reading materials. On average, the expenditure on books is 270,000/= Uganda shillings. Comparing this with the average enrolment of 1003 pupils per school as shown in Table II, gives us an average of 269/= Ug. Shs. per pupil to be spent on books per year. Indeed, the basic requirements of DIMP demand that 10% of the total UPE grant be spent on supplementary reading books (MoES, 2004:6). In addition, according to the District Education Officer (DEO) Pallisa, Mr. Fredsam Kubuule, schools use 25% of UPE funds to cater for other scholastic materials. He noted that if a head teacher finds a textbook is lost or destroyed, or wants to add on to the stock, after consultation with the teachers, he/she uses that vote to replace lost or damaged books.

Although efforts are in place to add to the stock through the DIMP programme, the budget allocations on the average of 269/= per pupil is far less than the cost of one book on the market. The minimum price for a supplementary reader is about Shs 3000. The system of procuring supplementary readers needs to change to take into account the actual cost of books. Instead of focusing only on the pupils, a new system could in addition assign at least a supplementary reader per pupil per year.

3.3 Promotion of Reading in Schools

Interviews with head teachers, teacher librarians and teachers showed that a number of activities were being deployed to promote reading in the schools. The cited activities which took into account the age and class levels of the pupils/children included the following:

a) Repackaging Information from books: Teachers had tried to repackage information from books into forms like charts which were being used in class. In some cases, after reading books, pupils would be requested to dramatize what they had read. In some schools, reading was encouraged in preparation for debates, which were being carried out weekly.

b) Reading Clubs: A few schools had formed reading clubs which assisted pupils/children to organise group readings and talk about the books they may have read. According to one respondent, the formation of groups, enabled children to borrow books and share the techniques of reading. In addition, some schools like Kibale P/S were encouraging children to write articles about the characters in the books they read and share with other children.

c) Use of the Library:

According to some teachers and teacher librarians, children practice reading by borrowing readers from the library. The fact that some children visit the library in their free time and borrow the books is a good contribution to the promotion of reading. Such practices enable children borrow books and develop abilities to read on their own. For example, in Kibale P/S, it was noted that pupils borrow books over the weekend and return them on Mondays. In fact, some head teachers confirmed that now children are trying to use English as much as possible due to practice of using the library. In some schools like Kabwangasi P/S, pupils confirmed using the library and were familiar with guidance given by teachers on how to read which they cited as follows:

- Do not make noise while reading
- Read and understand
- Do not sleep while reading
- Read instructions
- Do not give children at home—as they may mishandle the books.
- Read silently, read without pointing at the words
- Read without movement

In Gogonyo P/S, a P.7 pupil who is a Class Monitor has ever been told to know how to read. Another pupil said that he, can read the labels on books. Other pupils indicated that they know how to use the contents page to find things in the book. Those who showed no knowledge advanced the reason that it was “because the libraries are not there”. In some schools, like in Odepai P/S, a pupil said “they don’t allow us go to the library—not allowed because they fear we will steal the books”.

3.4 Challenges Hindering the School Library Development Programme in School

Respondents were required to indicate the problems hindering the SLDP in schools. Most responses indicated that shortage of storage space or lack of a dedicated library space was the greatest challenge to library development. The issue of space shortage has been aggravated by the high enrolments which are not necessarily matched by the same level of growth in terms of facilities, services, books etc.

Respondents further cited several challenges of procurement of books and other learning materials under the decentralised instructions materials procurement (DIMP) programme. For instance, it was noted that some suppliers produce lists of books which they don’t have. At the time of supplying the books are not available claiming that they are out of print and some times other suppliers instead suggest alternative titles. The DEO of Pallisa district corroborated the findings from the schools and added that, “suppliers of text books and supplementary readers, as well as the printers of books take long to [supply] books. We always end the financial year without paying. This means that the funds meant for buying books end up being sent back [to the Ministry of Finance].”

Several other stakeholders involved in book procurement agreed that in most cases the capacity of local suppliers is in doubt, which also affects the pricing of books. One such stakeholder the NLU (2006) acknowledged the problem as follows:

- Finding readers of levels appropriate to the target group. i.e. the levels indicated on the books are not automatically readable by the pupils in those age brackets. We have had to visit the schools to establish how well they pupils could read in order to get them the right materials.

- Appropriate books were few on market i.e. the titles with the language that suited the pupil's ability to read were very few.
- Some titles appearing on the publishers lists were not available in stock. After making selections and forwarding the lists for delivery we would be asked to change and select from the available titles. The titles could turn out not to be within the appropriate levels.
- The process of procurement was prolonged beyond what we expected because some titles were out of print or the copies were not enough.
- In some cases we established on delivery that the quality of the books i.e. paper, cover or binding was too poor and not suitable for that level of children. This meant that such books could not last beyond 5 children and therefore not serve our purpose. In such cases we resorted to substituting some books with fresh selections.
- It was a lot of work to record books for the schools when the titles were not all the same. ie we could not make copies of the same lists throughout as titles tended to vary among schools.
- There were very few books in the indigenous language.
- We had to establish what kind of books would be appropriate by visiting the education department in Pallisa and discussing with the officers.
- The age range and classes indicated on the publishers' catalogue were not the appropriate levels for the pupils of Pallisa so we had to select books for e.g. P1 readers for the primary three. The pre-school books of the alphabet were also selected for the P1 and P2 levels.

d) Lack of Purposeful Built Libraries: It was noted that most schools lack functional libraries. Even where a library exists, for example in Kabwangasi Demo School, that share the library with the Primary Teachers College (PTC), they demanded for their own library to help all classes.

e) Shortage of books in Schools: It was noted that there is generally inadequate quantities of books, especially supplementary books. Pallisa district generally had a textbook to pupil ratio of 1:5 which is well beyond the national average of 1:3. In terms of supplementary reading materials, the situation was even worse because of the limited emphasis for procurements for these kinds of books by government. Teachers indicated that the pricing of books was way out of reach for most rural schools and this would certainly affect the collection sizes in the schools.

e) **Lack of Opportunities for Training:** According to the DEO, the scope of employment does not provide for the employment of a librarian in schools. It is the duty of the head teacher to identify a teacher to undertake this additional responsibility of running a library or managing the school's book collection. It is clear that the need to induct these teacher librarian appointees in skills to manage libraries and establish and manage vibrant school based reading programmes is paramount. Teachers noted that there were no opportunities open to them to get training in this crucial area.

4. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Summary

The school library development project undertaken by NABOTU in Pallisa district succeeded in many ways. The programme inducted teachers from the beneficiary schools in different skills and as the findings have shown, quite a number of teachers have deployed the skills

learnt in different ways. The study also found that school children were now being guided/taught crucial skills for using books. Findings have also showed improvements in providing or creating opportunities for children to access books. A number of schools have devised new activities for promoting reading including formation of reading clubs. Of course there are still a number of challenges that schools need to scale such as a lack of facilities (buildings) and funds for continually stocking and restocking school libraries/collections and; the need for continuous skills development for teacher librarians who are just appointed to the role not because of any specialised training.

4.2 Conclusion

From the above observations, it can be concluded that the current state of libraries in schools is inadequate, and this has affected reading promotion. However, the interventions made under the School Library Development Programme (SLDP) with regards to training of teachers and donation of books respectively have had a positive influence on the beneficiary schools' reading programmes. It is clear that a programme designed and focused on improving school libraries, training teachers and helping schools with stocking of relevant storybooks would go a long way in providing a good environment for reading promotion and improving on the quality of education.

4.3 Recommendations

Given the foregoing observations and conclusions, the study makes the following recommendations:

1. Enhancing the development of School libraries

- a. Government needs to discuss and implement the school library for development policy to guide the development of school libraries.
- b. Government through its facilities grant should construct school libraries along with classroom blocks.
- c. There is need to recruit qualified librarians or teacher librarians who have a library qualification to run school libraries and school based reading programmes.
- d. Government should consider a teachers training curriculum that takes into account the key skills of teaching reading methods, promoting reading and managing school libraries.
- e. Districts working with Centre Coordinating Tutors could implement an in-service training programme for teachers already in service training them in the above skills.
- f. There is need to adopt a balanced budget ratio for buying textbooks and supplementary reading materials. The current emphasis on textbooks needs to shift in order to accommodate more supplementary reading materials that would improve the culture of reading.

2. Building and Strengthening Cooperation and Networks

- a. Districts should improve on supervision and monitoring to ensure that the support given to districts is put to effective use.
- b. Publishers and Suppliers of books should ensure that the titles provided on their lists are available or else utilise the UBA and UPA network to ensure that the right materials are supplied.
- c. Publishers need to make additional investments in developing reading materials in the local languages.
- d. The Government should revise/improve on UPE guidelines to include among the duties of a teacher and head teacher aspects of promoting reading in schools.

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