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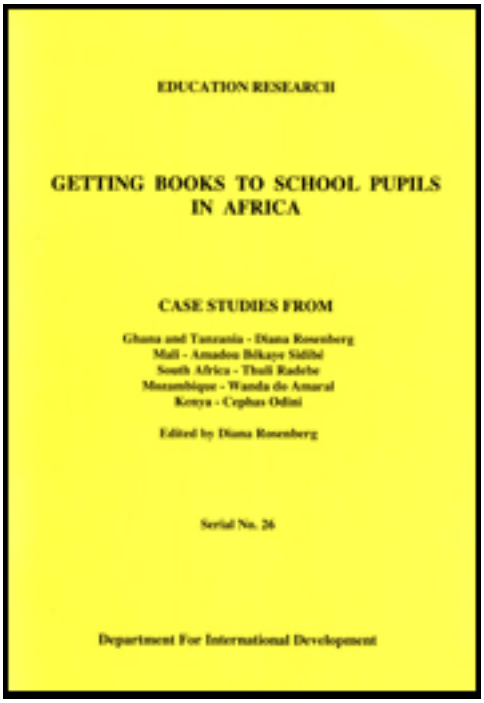
Getting books to school pupils in Africa - Education Research Paper No. 26, 1998, 134 p.


EDUCATION RESEARCH

GETTING BOOKS TO SCHOOL PUPILS IN AFRICA

CASE STUDIES FROM

Ghana and Tanzania - Diana Rosenberg
Mali - Amadou Békaye Sidibé
South Africa - Thuli Radebe
Mozambique - Wanda do Amaral
Kenya - Cephas Odini

Edited by Diana Rosenberg

Serial No. 26

Department For International Development

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June 1998

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Department for International Development

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Preface

This study was commissioned by the Department For International Development under the title *Accessibility Educational Materials by the School Population in Africa an analysis and evaluation of existing modalities and their cost-effectiveness (Research Scheme No. R 6956).* All costs were met by the Department.

After an initial planning workshop held in London in September 1997, local researchers returned to Africa to undertake case studies of different access modalities. An additional case study was undertaken in UK from the published literature.

The completed case studies have been edited and are contained in this report, together with an introduction and some conclusions. One case study, that of community resource centres (village reading rooms in Botswana) has not been submitted. The case studies from Mali and Mozambique have been translated into English.

Diana Rosenberg
March 1 998

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

ANC	African National Congress (South Africa)
BLD	Bibliothèque-Lecture-Dèveloppement (Libraries-Reading-Development) (Senegal)
BSU	Bibliothèques Scolaires et Universitaires (a book donation programme operating in Mali)
CAP	Educational Support Commission (Mozambique)
CEPD	Committee for Education Policy Document (South Africa)
CODE	Canadian Organization for Development through Education
CSF	Critical success factor
CSS	Central Statistical Services (South Africa)
DEO	District Education Officer (Kenya)
DET	Department of Education and Training (South Africa)
DFID	Department For International Development (UK) (previously known as ODA)
DoE	Department of Education (South Africa)
DSE	German Foundation for International Development
FP	Fundamental pedagogics
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
GDP	Gross domestic product
GLB	Ghana Library Board
GNP	Gross national product
HOA	House of Assembly (South Africa)
HOD	House of Delegates (South Africa)
HOR	House of Representatives (South Africa)

IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
INSET	In-service training
IPET	Implementation Plan for Education and Training (South Africa)
KIE	Kenya Institute of Education
LAM	Lycée Askia Mohammed (Bamako, Mali)
LIS	Library and information services
LRC	Learning Resource Centre
MINED	Ministry of Education (Mozambique)
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation (South Africa)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OBE	Outcomes-based education
ODA	Overseas Development Administration (UK) (now known as DFID)
OLP (Mali)	Operation Lecture Publique (Operation Popular Reading)
PRESET	Pre-service training
S.A.	South Africa
SCD	Schools and Colleges Department (of GLB)
SELP	Secondary English Language Project (Kenya)
SLS	School Library Service (of TLS)
SNE	National System of Education (Mozambique)
TAC	Teachers Advisory Centre
TLS	Tanzania Library Services
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations ChildrenÕs Fund
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas (UK)
ZIP	Zone of Educational Influence (Mozambique)

Map of Africa showing country locations of case studies

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Chapter one - Introduction

Supplementary reading: definition and role
School libraries in Africa
Other access modalities
Case studies
Preliminary workshop
Problems and limitations
References

Diana Rosenberg

One of the fundamental requirements of all educational systems is the adequate provision of relevant and appropriate reading and other instructional and learning materials for use by teachers and their pupils. Such provision entails the authorship and publication of the materials. But also essential to the process is their distribution into the hands of the users, either directly or indirectly, via storage, organization, control and dissemination by an information centre. Whereas course textbooks can be distributed through retail outlets and individual purchase, reference and general reading materials require some form of organization for shared use. Books are too expensive for any but those which are compulsory reading to be purchased. It is not feasible to expect an individual to buy a book for reference or for once-only reading.

It is the aim of this study to examine some of the modalities through which the school population in Africa gain access to supplementary reading materials and to reach some conclusions on which are the most effective.

Supplementary reading: definition and role

Textbooks are written to support a specific course and relate directly to the syllabus of that course. Reference and general books supplement course textbooks by offering alternative approaches, additional information and knowledge of subjects not directly covered by the school curriculum. The importance to the educational process of access to a wide variety of reading materials is widely recognized. Without it, what is taught in

the classroom is not reinforced and the quality and permanence of the benefits of education are endangered. Such access:

- develops the ability to read and extends the vocabulary;
- develops a teaching force which is capable of moving beyond the confines of set books and textbooks;
- supplements and enriches work done by pupils in the classroom;
- encourages independent access to information and arouses the interest of pupils in matters outside the curriculum;
- provides training in the use and retrieval of information, a skill which is essential for higher education and lifelong learning.

School libraries in Africa

The establishment of school libraries has always been the traditional and preferred solution to providing access to supplementary reading material. These not only have the capacity to acquire, organize and make general reading materials available for the use of teachers and school pupils, but can also organize collections of multiple copies of textbooks for loan, when purchase is not possible.

But in Africa (and developing countries in general), whilst the need for education has been recognized, the need for libraries has not. Governments and Ministries of Education have not accepted that library and book provision should be a component of educational investment. The establishment and maintenance of school libraries has been relegated to the last place on the scale of priorities. The majority of schools possess no library. Where some semblance of a school library does exist, it is often no more than a few shelves of outdated and worn out material, inadequately staffed and thus marginal to the teaching-learning process.

The situation is, in fact, little changed since Independence. The 1960 Hockey report on the Development of Library Services in East Africa surveyed seventy-five mainly secondary school libraries and found book stocks inadequate and unsuitable, accommodation poor and teachers uninterested. The intervening years provide examples of a number of initiatives: school library policies, standards and centralized school library services. But a 1990 World Bank report on Zambia reported a very similar situation as at Independence: school libraries were said to be mainly passive elements, with outdated and irrelevant books and in run-down buildings. And that

situation pervades most of Africa.

Nevertheless, school libraries remain on the agenda. A recurrent theme of school library literature in the 1980s and 1990s was the necessity to look for innovative solutions to the inadequate state of school libraries in Africa. IFLA decided to examine the problem in a pre-session Seminar in 1993; its aim was to examine the philosophy and operation of school libraries and look for ways to motivate authorities and agencies. In 1995 a seminar in Uganda was held to again generate interest in the establishment of school libraries. There is an increased interest in resource-based education. Mali is an example of a country which has recently and for the first time established a school library programme at the basic level. Tanzania now has a similar policy.

Other access modalities

In recent years there have been some initiatives in Africa aimed at improving the availability of reading materials in schools, without actually re-establishing school libraries in their traditional form. The rationale for this trend is illustrated by the debate that is taking place in South Africa. Whilst it is recognized that the provision of relevant resources to basic education learners is a state responsibility, lack of finance makes the prospect of providing every school with a library a pipe-dream. There is a necessity to consider the alternatives to the model of 'one school one library'. This necessity can also be viewed as an opportunity: the alternatives may prove more appropriate to the new education philosophy that is being evolved.

One alternative is the setting up of community resource centres, which aim to provide reference and referral services to the whole community. These centres are often located in schools and tend to be mostly used by school children and their teachers. Notable examples are found in the rural areas of Botswana and Zimbabwe; they also exist in most other African countries. South Africa has a pilot project involving the establishment of Learning and Education Centres. Ghana has its Community Libraries Project. Another is the establishment of teachers' resource centres, now found throughout Africa. They are set up to serve a number of schools and stock a variety of textbooks both at the teacher and pupil levels, reference books and sets of books for use in the classroom. There has been a resurgence of interest in the use of classroom libraries and book box libraries; examples are found in Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa. Increasingly NGOs (rather than Government) are providing support in the provision of reading materials; there is the Ghana Book Trust; READ in South Africa is well known; BLD (Bibliothèque-Lecture-Développement) is a recent arrival in Senegal.

Case studies

There is therefore a proliferation of access modalities now in existence across Africa. But little research has yet been carried out into their operations and use. This study was therefore set up with the objective of understanding which work best and in which circumstances and to recommend what strategy or strategies are affordable and sustainable. Given the lack of published data, it was decided that a case study approach was the most feasible and practical. By examining and evaluating in depth a different modality in a different country, it is hoped that the resulting information will provide some indication of how successful (or otherwise) the various modalities are in providing access to supplementary reading materials and point the way for further research.

Available finance limited the case studies to six:

- school library services (Ghana, Tanzania)
- school libraries (Mali)
- classroom libraries, NGO-supported (South Africa)
- book box libraries (Mozambique)
- teachers resource centres (Kenya)
- community resource centres (Botswana)

Nationals, employed in the information field and with a record of research and interest in school level information provision, were recruited to undertake the case studies in Botswana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique and South Africa. The case study on school library services (mainly of historical significance) was to be undertaken from an examination of the published literature.

Preliminary workshop

Before the local researchers started their case study research, a workshop was held in London in September 1997. The purpose was to establish a common approach and methodology, so that all case studies would be undertaken long the same lines and the resulting data would be comparable. Specifically the aims of the workshop were:

- to discuss and identify the factors that determine information provision and delivery, in the context of access modalities at the school level;

- to explore and discuss concepts and methods of evaluation and their appropriateness for assessing the performance and impact of access modalities;

- to provide researchers with the opportunity to develop, present and

discuss their research strategies;

- to develop and agree:

  - a common methodological framework on which to base each case study;
  - a timetable for completion;
  - details of data presentation.

One day was spent on issues in case study strategy, including objectives of providing access, factors in providing access, ways of modality analysis, ways of evaluation, types of data and methods of data collection. Researchers then prepared and presented a research strategy for their particular case study. Finally a common framework and timetable for the case studies was agreed and common data collection instruments designed.

It was agreed that each case study would be submitted by the end of December 1997 and would cover the topics listed below:

- *country context:* socio-economic situation; educational policies and practices; information provision modalities in general and in particular at the school level;

- *background of modality:* stakeholders/objectives/CSFs; origins, history, development; functions; governance; target user populations;

- *methodology:* choice and rationale; methods used in data collection and analysis; sample; problems;

- *analysis:* collection development; staffing; physical facilities; finance; use;

- *evaluation:* measures of cost, effectiveness and user satisfaction; assessment of effectiveness; impact;

- *conclusions:* overall assessment; future prospects; future strategies.

Problems and limitations

The overall methodology of this research, based as it is on the labour of local

researchers working in relative isolation, inevitably resulted in case studies which vary greatly in depth and quality. The findings are not easily comparable. Although the preliminary workshop went some way towards lessening this limitation by providing a common framework and designing common data collection instruments, greater consistency could only have been achieved through much closer co-operation and coordination in both data collection and data analysis. Once the case studies had been submitted, it was not feasible to request any further data collection. One case study - that of community resource centres in Botswana - has never been completed and submitted. Therefore it has not been possible to consider the relative effectiveness of this modality.

Local researchers met with time and funding constraints. Two months maximum was allowed for planning and gaming authority for the research, as well as collecting the data. Funding was restricted to covering stationery and a small amount of travel. Researchers had to fit in the research with their normal work load. Data collection had to be limited to small and local samples; for example the researcher in South Africa could only sample three districts in the Pietermaritzburg area. In Mozambique, neither time nor the available budget allowed travel to Cabo Delgado, the location of one of the projects examined, in the far north of the country. And these constraints were sometimes exacerbated by events in-country. In Kenya the teachers went on strike; there was little time left for data collection when they returned and it was therefore restricted to only one district (instead of the two planned) and to Teachers Advisory Centres at the primary level. In South Africa, the data collection time coincided with school examinations; therefore not a lot of time could be expected from the teachers. In Mozambique the schools were closed in December and January, another reason why data collection could not be extended to Cabo Delgado. Mali suffered from student strikes, which resulted in the closure of schools during October and November.

All researchers met with a lack of existing hard data, in particular statistics of cost and use. The intention had been to rely as much as possible on published (for example annual reports) and unpublished sources (such as records of income and expenditure, of purchase, of stock, of loans and visits) and to concentrate on finding out about user satisfaction and perceived impact of the modality during any interviews. But such records had not been maintained. In the school library services case study, where it had been hoped to rely on the journal articles and books already published, it was found that information was only available for the period of first establishment, with nothing on the succeeding years. (Local researchers were then employed to gather data, but even so operational details were hard to come by, particularly in relation to costs.) In Kenya, those in charge of Teachers Advisory Centres did not maintain records on the use or size of collections. In Mozambique, the complete archive documenting the 'mobile' book box libraries had been destroyed. All case studies therefore suffer from incomplete data, especially where costs are concerned.

The intention had been to cover on the provision of educational materials at both the primary and secondary level. In the event three of the case studies are restricted to the primary level: book boxes, classroom libraries and teachers' advisory centres. (In Kenya, it had been planned to also study the very similar learning resource centres that operate at the secondary level, but time did not allow.) Only that of Mali examined school libraries at both levels, whilst the school library services of Ghana and Tanzania only served secondary schools. Although the Mali study concluded the problems facing school libraries were much the same at both levels and one of the recommendations from teachers interviewed in South Africa was that the classroom library programme be extended to secondary schools, the level of education addressed by each modality must be born in mind when general conclusions are reached. Some, but not necessarily all, will be applicable to both levels of education.

During the preliminary workshop, it was agreed that the assessment of the various modalities would be on measures of effectiveness, whether of their performance or their impact on the education process as a whole. Effectiveness assessment within the context of defined educational objectives and learner outcomes provides a strong argument for the value of programmes, this being the kind of information that decision makers want when they ask for accountability. Attempts were therefore made to gather information on the size, sufficiency, relevance and costs of collections, their services and the use made of them. For impact, changes were sought in areas like pupil abilities and examination pass rates.

However this approach does have integral problems. There is no agreement on the definition of effectiveness nor techniques for its measurement in the information field. It seems far easier to identify problems that inhibit success than to identify elements that enable successful programme implementation. Impact is a particularly elusive concept. In education, it is difficult to link an outcome to a particular input, such as provision of books. Various other factors like teacher quality and facilities have also to be considered. One has to rely on perceptions rather than actual cause-to-effect evidence.

Using any form of cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness analysis proved even more problematic. These methodologies were discussed during the Workshop and it was agreed that it might be feasible to examine the cost-effectiveness of a modality by developing cost indicators and then weighing these against the efficiency and effectiveness of the service. Such indicators could be the cost per item or the cost per user. However this form of analysis is very demanding in terms of data requirements. It could only be used if the cost data was already available; in the event very little cost data was obtained by researchers.

The chapters that follow are each devoted to a case study of one modality of access from one country in Africa. More details about the individual methodologies used are

included and any data collecting instruments used can be found in the Appendix. References follow each chapter. The final chapter attempts to reach some conclusions.

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Chapter two - School library services: Ghana and Tanzania

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Diana Rosenberg

A school library service is a system which directs and assists the development of libraries in schools on a national or regional basis. At a minimum it involves the setting of policy and standards of provision plus advice on the establishment and maintenance of libraries. It can also offer assistance in the selection of stock, the acquisition, processing and distribution of books and journals and the training of staff Such a service can be located within a public library or in a Ministry of Education; or sometimes it is the result of collaboration between the two.

Origins of school library services in Africa

In Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa), the concept of the school library service was introduced to Anglophone countries at the time of Independence and was linked to the establishment of public library systems. This followed the examples provided by the United Kingdom (UK) and South Africa. In the latter country, school libraries were (until the 1950s) seen as an integral part of the public library service. And the UK government recommended that there be a school library service arm to any national library service that was set up with its support at Independence. So the Jamaica Library Service in 1952 established a centralized schools service and the 1960 Hockey Report on the development of library services in East Africa recommended likewise. There was a general consensus that the reason for the poor state of school libraries in most of the developing world was the lack of central direction and no clearly defined policy on their development strategy. It was also recognized that the involvement of

public libraries in the development of school libraries would be of mutual benefit, since it is the products of the school system who form the backbone of future public library services readership. Co-ordination and centralization were also seen as the most economic use of the scarce resources of trained staff and reading materials.

Ghana

In Ghana, although school libraries were never made the legal responsibility of the public library service, from its inception Ghana Library Board (GLB) showed itself keen to assist the Ministry of Education. From 1959, GLB, at the request of the Ministry, operated a mobile library service to middle schools. But it became obvious that school libraries needed far more help than the occasional loan of additional books. With the exception of a few, all were in need of development grants, adequate accommodation and advice on selection and routines. A Working Committee, with members from GLB, the Ministry and the British Council, was set up in 1967 to carry out a survey of school libraries in secondary schools and teacher training colleges. It concluded that the main problem was the lack of any clearly defined policy, the haphazard nature of library provision and the poor staffing situation. As an interim measure, a VSO librarian was recruited as a School Library officer in Ashanti and workshops held for teacher-librarians. But the lack of any library consciousness in institutions of learning still prevailed. Any improvements were temporary and libraries tended to deteriorate after visits.

It became clear that something more long-term and far-reaching was required. In 1972, GLB decided to establish a Schools and Colleges Department (SCD) at its headquarters in Accra. This Department was given the responsibility to advise and assist in the establishment of good and effective libraries in secondary schools and teacher training colleges throughout Ghana. The overhead costs of running the service were met by GLB, with the Ministry of Education providing money for the purchase of books and journals for the school libraries.

Tanzania

Unlike GLB, Tanzania Library Services (TLS) was given the legal mandate to revitalize and develop special, school, college, government and public libraries into a single, integrated national library system. Therefore a school library service was on the agenda from 1961 and President Nyerere, when he opened the headquarters of TLS in 1967, made a point of emphasizing that the development of school libraries was one of its key responsibilities.

Given the inadequate funds and insufficient trained manpower at its disposal, TLS had to decide what sort of school library service it could offer. It examined two possible

options - to target all schools with a small amount of aid or to limit aid to a small number of schools, to which a reasonable service could be offered and which could become demonstration libraries. The latter method was adopted and, with the help of UNESCO, an expert in school library work was recruited in 1968. The establishment of the School Library Service (SLS), with its headquarters in the National Central Library in Dar es Salaam, was financed within the 2nd 5-year Development Plan, 1969-1974.

Activities and achievements

The ultimate aims of both GLB and TLS in their service to schools were very similar. Both restricted their work to the secondary level, although the former encompassed all schools, whilst the latter initially concentrated on establishing model schools. The aims were:

- to advise schools on the organization and running of their libraries, through means of regular visits and other professional assistance;

- to organize seminars, workshops and in-service training for school library personnel;

- to upgrade collections though the building up standard collections, the loaning of material and the provision of reading lists;

- to order, process and distribute books and journals.

Ghana

The first ten years were ones of steady growth. The number of institutions participating in the programmes of the Schools and Colleges Department rose from 120 in 1972, to 245 in 1975, to 350 at the end of 1978. Activities have included:

- *visits.* In the first year 226 library visits were made and advice offered on re-organization to meet professional standards;

- *information. A* book list of recommended titles and a manual on the organization and operation of libraries were published and distributed;

- *training.* Numerous training course for teacher-librarians and in-service courses for school library assistants were mounted;

- *model libraries.* A model school library was opened at Accra High School in 1974, with the objective of improving standards in school libraries in Accra. A School Library Resource Centre at Aburi Girls Secondary School was set up in conjunction with the Department of Library and Archival Studies at the University of Ghana. One of the intentions was to monitor the effect of library services on student achievement;

- *materials.* Books and journals were purchased centrally, processed and distributed.

To run this service, GLB employed (as at 1981) a staff of four professionals, led by an Assistant Director, and 22 non-professionals. It was assisted financially by the British Council (which for example provided two years of periodical subscriptions and £5000 to purchase books for the model library) and the Ministry of Education, which granted money for the purchase of books and journals (for example US$100,000 in 1975 for books and £18,000 in 1978 for periodical subscriptions).

Since 1982, achievements have not been so spectacular. Although the number of institutions officially participating in the programme stood at 494 in 1991, the value of what is now provided is in some doubt. Alemna, writing in 1996, goes so far as to say that the SCD exists almost in name only.

Activities have greatly reduced. Some of the duties proposed in 1972, such as advice to architects in the design of school libraries, the setting up of a central rebinding service, the formation of a School Library Association, were never really addressed from the start. But even advisory visits, training courses and the purchase and distribution of books and journals, frequent during the early years, are now few and far between. In the seven years since 1990, only the following activities have been undertaken:

- four advisory visits to schools;
- five training courses for school library staff;
- 13,000 books and 350 journals purchased and distributed;
- 39,400 donated books distributed.

Staff has also been drastically reduced, compared to the early years. In 1985, there was at total of 11 staff working in the Department, in 1995, 13, i.e. around half of the 1981 figure of 26. Underfunding is also a problem. GLB only provides SCD with a small imprest to cover the operational costs of the Department. Any money for the purchasing of books and journals must come from those schools, which choose to pay their library grants to GLB. In 1985, the equivalent of US$7,190 was received; in 1995 only US$480.

Events are overtaking SCD and its role. Partly as a recognition of the poor performance of SCD, the Ministry of Education in 1986 set up a Community Libraries Project; one of its aims being to improve the standard of education of school pupils in the country (Alemna 1996). In Accra alone there are nine community libraries. Such libraries act as supplements for the poor school libraries and inadequate home libraries. However their success has been limited by poor finance, lack of materials and lack of trained staff. Another development is the establishment of the Ghana Book Trust, an NGO operating exclusively for charitable and educational purposes. It supplies books to schools and libraries throughout the country. It has also helped in the training of library assistants for these libraries. Enhancing access to information is no longer seen to be only the province of government.

Nevertheless, although the activities and influence of SCD would appear to be on the wane, its impact on the improvement of school libraries in Ghana must be given due recognition. A teacher-librarian interviewed during the data collection, considered that the training courses offered for school librarians and the processing and distribution of materials for school libraries had definitely helped to improve services. More such training courses were wanted, together with a closer supervision of what went on in the school libraries. Overall school libraries were better organized now, than before the establishment of SCD. Its very existence had helped to introduce the concept and purpose of the school library.

Tanzania

The UNESCO adviser had two tasks:

- to establish, in selected schools, model school libraries to serve as examples for teachers throughout the country;

- to provide assistance and advice to teachers in the selection of books and the operation of school libraries.

Each model library would be used to demonstrate:

- well-selected materials and their effects;
- the use that can be made of a library;
- the value of a library in the total development of the school pupil;
- purpose-built accommodation, furniture and equipment;
- good library organization.

In effect only three model libraries were established, one in each of three regions.

The model library route was soon seen as being slow to produce results on the ground. Therefore, in 1971, a pilot school mobile library service was started, serving four regions: Mbeya, Iringa, Morogoro and Dodoma. This aimed to reinforce the book stock of all school libraries in an area, with visits two or three times a year for book return and selection.

At the same time efforts were made to improve the resources and organization of school libraries all over Tanzania:

- recommended book lists for secondary schools were produced and updates issued every three months;
- a list of recommended periodicals was published;
- a manual of library organization was published;
- minimum standards and a list of basic books in each subject were compiled;
- courses were run for teacher librarians;
- designs for school libraries and drawings of basic equipment were made available.

In addition, to try and overcome the staffing problem a Certificate in Librarianship course was started by TLS in 1972. It was hoped that this would train school library assistants.

The School Library Service was mainly financed by TLS from government funds. In the 2nd Development Plan, 18% of the budget was allocated to SLS. Help was also received from UNESCO, in particular for the first member of the staff. Up to 1976, SLS was run by one professional and one library assistant.

Expansion of the School Library Service stopped in 1976. In the 3rd 5-year Development Plan, 1976-1981, nothing was planned and nothing took place. No more model libraries were opened (the plan had been to start one in each of the 20 regions of Tanzania) and no more regions were served by the mobile service. The planned centralization of acquisition, processing and distribution of books was never started. Primary schools were never included (although they could apply for book boxes from the Extension Branch of TLS).

Even the operations of the existing service were barely maintained. Although staffing levels were retained and even increased (in 1995 it was staffed by one professional librarian, 3 paraprofessional library assistants and one library attendant), funding was reduced to a bare minimum. Records are not available, as TLS does not publish expenditure for individual departments or divisions. But, in an interview during the data

collection, the former Deputy Director General of TLS admitted that the SLS programmes were severely affected by the inadequate government subventions from the early 80s onwards. And in the 1992/93 financial year, no expenses for SLS other than salaries were covered by the TLS budget.

Nevertheless the SLS still exists. In the seven years since 1990, it has succeeded in:

- making 6 advisory visits;
- publishing 8 lists of recommended books;
- purchasing and distributing 2,250 books and journals;
- distributing 112,000 donated books and journals;
- reissuing the manual on library procedures.

The School Mobile Library had long since been grounded. And although general training for library assistants was offered (the National Library Assistants' Certificate Course, in-service training, etc.), none was directed at the specific needs of teacher-librarians or school administrators. The main function of SLS today would seem to be that of an agency for receiving and distributing donated materials.

By 1985, TLS was admitting that its much vaunted supportive services to schools had been curtailed. In that year, the Deputy Director wrote: 'Tanzania Library Service is a large organization. Its operations are national and it has many commitments. The services it provides to schools are therefore very minimal' (Ilomo 1985). SLS was no longer seen as one of the top priorities of TLS. In the same paper, Ilomo suggests three approaches to work with schools:

- developing and maintaining professional standards and awareness, in co-operation with the Ministry of National Education;

- on the spot guidance and assistance in the establishment, organization and management of school libraries, on request;

- provision of a School Mobile Library to four regions.

More recently, the government of Tanzania has introduced new strategies to revive school libraries. The Sectoral Development Policy for Education, which has library components, is one of those recent efforts. The government has realized that operationally TLS cannot manage all school library activities. In its plan to establish school libraries in all schools in Tanzania, the role of a SLS will be played by the Ministry of Education and Culture, in conjunction with local authorities. The role of TLS will be limited to advisory services, development and maintenance of standards

and manuals and maintenance of professionalism (Interviews with former Deputy Director General, TLS and Chief Librarian, TLS).

At the same time, those interviewed in 1997 generally agreed that the SLS had resulted in some improvements. The consultation services provided by TLS had benefited a number of schools, particularly in the private sector. And the fact the Ministry of Education and Culture had recently introduced a new strategy to revive school libraries, suggests that it has realized that they are important to the educational process.

Reasons for failure

Despite initial enthusiasm for the concept, school library services in Africa have failed to maintain their early promise. The activities of those that were established declined; this is true not only for Ghana and Tanzania but also for Nigeria, where three State Public Library Boards had set up School Library Services in the 1970s. In other countries, like Kenya and Uganda, a school library service never left the drawing board. Lack of money is usually given for their ultimate failure. And Ilomo, writing in 1985, concluded that financial limitation was the main obstacle. Finance certainly played a part, but this reason is often used to disguise the existence of other crucial factors. And the availability of finance does not necessarily mean that it will be channelled to the development of school libraries. Nigeria in the 80s was rich with oil money; libraries in universities benefited, but those in schools continued to decline (Alemna 1990).

Ghana

School libraries in Ghana still 'face a myriad of problems' and these are not being solved by SCD (Alemna 1990). A regional librarian, interviewed during the collection of data in Ghana, said that the main way of improving the performance of SCD would be to provide an increase in funding and, as a result, in materials for schools. However, those writers who have analyzed the situation, place far more weight on the failure, over the years, to convince educational planners and administrators and the teaching profession as a whole that school libraries are a necessity and not a luxury. The same regional librarian also admitted that school libraries are deteriorating, because of lack of government attention and low interest from administrators. Reasons given for the overall lack of impact of SCD are:

- official interest in libraries has been 'cool and casual, rather than active and sustained' (Alemna 1996). This lack of commitment by government and lack of interest by school principals and heads is seen as the main reason why standards (neither those laid down in the 1972 *Manual for School Libraries in Ghana*, nor those proposed by Alemna in 1993) have not been adopted, legislation has not been introduced, and monies

allocated to libraries have often been diverted for other purposes. There is no specific training requirement for school librarians in Ghana. The resulting use of unqualified staff has led to poor services and libraries which do not add to the quality of education offered in the schools. Evidence to convince those in power positions on the importance of libraries has not been made available. Alemna, writing in 1994, commented that no-one appeared to be in a position to give any clear indication as to whether the growth of organized library services in schools had any impact on the poor reading habits of school leavers - which was the key reason for setting up the Schools and Colleges Department in the first place. Even the introduction of a new educational system in Ghana in 1986, one that demanded greater use of books and libraries, did not result in more support for SCD and its role in developing school libraries;

- SCD has always been in an ambiguous position organizationally. Its operational status, vis à vis both GLB and the Ministry of Education, has never been clearly defined for the purposes of co-ordination. Without a secure source of funding, it has been difficult to plan long-term programmes. SCD has always led a hand-to-mouth existence. What is needed is a School Libraries Division within the Ministry of Education, with which SCD could cooperate;

- any school library needs an adequate and ongoing supply of relevant books and journals. Appropriate material needs to be produced locally and until there is a viable local publishing industry producing such material and in sufficient quantities, it will always be difficult to stock school libraries. Reliance on imported and donated material from outside the country is not a viable option.

Given the very evident failure of SCD to continue to develop and support school libraries in Ghana, it was dispiriting to find that there are no current plans to alter or change the role of SCD, to make it more functionally relevant to the problems faced by school libraries.

Tanzania

Asked about the current state of school libraries in Tanzania, interviewees said that those in government-owned primary and secondary schools were dead. The few existing school libraries in Tanzania were run by private organizations. The situation in 1997 was much the same as it was thirty years earlier, when the SLS was just starting. The latter had had little impact.

Misgivings about the likely impact of Tanzania's School Library Service were voiced early on in its life, both by Miss Taylor, the last expatriate head of SLS, and the Director of TLS, Mr Kaungamno. The overriding problem was that schools themselves had to want and to recognize the need for libraries, to consider that a well-stocked and well-organized library was essential for teaching and learning. Only then would a part of the *per capita* grant given to each school be reserved for library expenditure. Only then would schools see the need to appoint permanent trained library staff, to ensure control and continuity, rather than rely on teachers, who were frequently transferred and, anyway, had other duties to perform. As it was, the education curriculum was biased towards formal instruction and teachers only expected textbooks to be read; broad reading was not encouraged. Unless there was a change of attitude towards libraries, no lessons could be learnt from model libraries. Mobile libraries could only supplement a school's own collection; the latter had to be at least adequate. Advice and training was of little use, if it fell on deaf ears. In short, it was not possible to impose libraries on schools.

These same reasons were reiterated by those interviewed in 1997. Although TLS had the legal mandate to develop school libraries, it was recognized that the momentum must come from the Ministry of Education and, in the schools, from the headmasters. It was essential that the co-ordinator of any SLS should be based in the Ministry. Only teachers and school administrators could provide the opportunities for librarians to speak on the importance of school libraries and how they might be used to enhance the education process.

Of course funding or lack of it was also given as a reason for the failure of SLS to maintain its services, whether in the purchase of books, the running of the mobile service or even at the very basic level of making transport available for librarians to visit schools.

Another reason was that, as in Ghana, the local book industry needed to be developed, so as to provide materials which were relevant and appropriate to the school population at a reasonable price.

Evaluation and conclusions

Despite its relative lack of success in practice, the school library concept remains a popular solution for ensuring access to reading materials. The Director of TLS (as late as 1979) declared that the experience of Africa had proved that a school library service is the right course of action, with the national library service taking the lead. And for countries like Kenya, which never managed to establish such a service, the call throughout the 1980s was for a definite government policy, enshrining standards in

terms of library buildings, books, equipment and staff and for these to be implemented through the development of a comprehensive school library service. But the continuing deplorable state of school libraries is leading to a more realistic approach. It is recognized that Tanzania, where the legal responsibilities are clearly spelled out, has not managed to overcome problems. Whereas a Workshop on School Libraries at the 1984 IFLA Conference still favoured the development of school library services, an IFLA Seminar in 1993 was more cautious. Yes, an explicit government policy and training for those running school libraries was considered necessary. But co-operation and collaboration with other libraries rather than the setting up of a school library service was recommended. And the encouragement of a local publishing industry, so that relevant reading materials were easily available, was thought to be equally important.

Certainly the experiences of school library services in Ghana and Tanzania tend to support these conclusions. One thing that comes out very clearly is that any such service, whether comprehensive or limited in its objectives, must be based in the Ministry of Education rather than a national library service or public library. It must have the total commitment of that Ministry; it must arise from the expressed needs of school heads and administrators; it must be recognized as an essential part of the education process; its programmes must dovetail with the teaching programmes. Only then will it stand a chance of receiving financial support. Once established, such a service can then request co-operation from other libraries, for example in establishing standards or in training of staff to run the libraries.

Another conclusion is that a school library service, however comprehensive, can only supplement the library that is established and maintained by the school. The need for libraries has to be accepted by both teachers and parents; their value (e.g. in improving examination results) has to be demonstrable. The support offered by a school library service has to be demand-led. Libraries are bottom-up rather than top-down operations; they are the result of community need. Only then will financial support (through, for example, parental contributions on pupil enrolment or charity walks organized by the school - suggestions made by interviewees in Tanzania) be forthcoming.

A school library service presupposes that school libraries in each school are the best way of providing access to reading materials. Of the two countries studied, Ghana is now moving towards community libraries as an alternative. And Tanzania has experimented with joint school-public libraries. Maybe the answer may lie in cooperation between different types of libraries and taking advantage of what exists.

One advantage of a school library service is that it should benefit from economies of scale: centralized training, rotating book collections, expert advice. However, in practice in Africa, such a service seems to have become an expensive and not very effective additional layer of bureaucracy. And when funds for the purchase of reading

materials are in such short supply, it is hard to defend the existence of this extra layer. To pay the salaries of 13 staff (as in Ghana) to make four advisory visits to schools, run five training courses and distribute a small number of books over a period of the last seven years is not cost effective. And the same is true for Tanzania, where 5 staff only managed to make 6 visits, publish 8 reading lists and again purchase and distribute a relatively small number of books over the seven years. Among those interviewed, the centralized services that were most valued by the schools were expert advice and the provision of specialized training courses for school librarians. Perhaps these could be provided more cost effectively by small non-governmental bodies set up for that specific purpose? Such as the Ghana Book Trust and, in Senegal, BLD (Bibliothèque-Lecture-Développement).

A final conclusion is that school libraries are there to provide supplementary reading materials. Some of this material may come from outside the country and through donations; at the moment most of the material distributed in Ghana and Tanzania is composed of donations from abroad. But the core, if it is to be relevant to school age needs, must be published and available locally. This requires a vibrant local book industry. If this is lacking, then the contribution of any school library to education will be drastically reduced.

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Data, on the development since 1975, on the recent activities and on the performance of the school library services of Ghana and Tanzania, was collected in late 1997 by Professor A. A. Alemna, Department of Library and Archival Studies, University of Ghana and Alli Mcharazo, Tanzania Library Services, through questionnaire and interviews. The data collection instrument used is given in the Appendix.

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Chapter three - School libraries: Mali

Background
Methodology
'A library in every school' programme
Libraries at the secondary level
Conclusion
Recommendations
References

Amadou Békaye SIDIBÉ

Background

Socio-economic and political context

Mali is a landlocked country situated in the heart of West Africa. It covers an area of 1,240,000 sq. km, and has common borders with seven countries: Niger and Burkina Faso to the east, Senegal and Mauritania to the west, Guinea and Ivory Coast to the south, and Algeria to the north. According to the 1994 census it had a population of 10,443,000 with a growth rate of 3% over the period 1990-1994. The bulk of this population, which is expected to reach 12 million by 1999 and 25.5% of whom are under 15 years of age, is rural (74% as against 26% for the urban population). It is made up of such ethnic groups as the Bambara, Fula, Senufo, Bobo, Tuareg, etc. which give the country an unparalleled diversity and cultural richness.

Economically, Mali is a very poor country. Its economy depends essentially on the agricultural sector (42% of GNP) and the tertiary sector (43% of GNP), with the industrial sector contributing only 15%. In 1994 the Gross National Product (GNP) was estimated at US$1,871 million and the *per capita* income at US$250.

Since 1982 Mali has been subject to quite a strict International Monetary Fund

structural adjustment programme. This programme has obliged and encouraged many state employees to take retirement. It has also led to the introduction of an entry competition to slow down the influx of young graduates into the civil service. That is why librarianship is suffering from such a shortage of specialists. Instead of recruiting, the authorities prefer to make transfers within the administrative or teaching staff to provide management for the libraries.

From a historical viewpoint, Mali is the heir to great empires, such as that of Ghana in the 13th century. In the 10th and 11th centuries Islam began to enter the northern part of the country, becoming strongly established there. In the 14th and 15th centuries relations with the Arab world were enriched and consolidated. It was also at this time that Mali established its first universities, for example the University of Timbuktu. Those centuries also saw its first great writers and translators of Arabic documents.

In 1850 the systematic colonization of Africa began. Frenchmen such as Faidherbe, Galliéni and others gradually invaded Malian territory. They met with fierce resistance from kings and emperors such as Samory Touré, El Hadj Omar Tall and others. But thanks to their state of the art technology and their war policy (divide and rule) they were victorious.

The French went on to despoil Mali of most of its cultural wealth. Precious copies of the Koran, for example, were carried off. Between 1909 and 1915 revolts broke out (by the Bobo, Beledougou, and the Kunta) but these were unable to overthrow the colonial government. And so the political struggle took over. The US-RDA party was established. Demands were stepped up. Faced with this, in 1956, the Loi Gaston Defferre or loi-cadre (framework law), authorizing the establishment of semi-autonomous governments in the colonies, was promulgated. On 17 January 1959 Mali and Senegal formed a federation, which declared Independence in June 1960. In August the federation broke down and Mali gained Independence on 22 September 1960.

In 1962 the first president, Modibo Keita, reformed the educational system, a reform which became the cornerstone of education in Mali. In 1968 Modibo Keita was overthrown by the military, headed by Moussa Traoré. The people, weary of the economic crisis that the country was suffering and exhausted by the exactions committed by the government militia, began to hope, but the hope was unassuaged for twenty-three years as the military were unable to bring prosperity to the country. On the contrary, during this period, state affairs were not well managed. Under Moussa Traoré the 1962 reform was revised, amended, adapted and readapted several times. But, alas, to no purpose.

On 26 March 1991 the people once again revolted and overthrew the regime of Moussa Traoré. Multi-partyism was introduced and the press diversified. Hope once again filled

people's hearts, the hope of seeing all the country's children getting an education.

Educational policies and practices

Mali inherited an inadequate educational system which was designed to train administrators and clerks who would help the colonizer better establish his rule. The ambition was not to promote and extend education to as many as possible of the indigenous population but to train assistants won over to the European cause.

On gaining Independence, Mali had to train cadres to ensure its administration and manage its economy, in short, to make its Independence effective. To achieve that, required effective, rapid, mass education, hence the reform of the educational system in 1962. This reform set out five general principles:

- mass quality education;
- education that could provide with maximum economy of time and money all the cadres that the country needed for its various development plans;
- education to guarantee a cultural level that would enable our qualifications to be as good as those of modem states;
- education whose content was based not only on specifically African and Malian values but also on universal values;
- education that decolonized minds.

The 1962 reform was revised and corrected in 1964 by the first seminar on education which recommended:

- adapting curricula to national realities;
- orienting pupils towards the rural sector from the end of the first cycle (primary education);
- strengthening technical training.

The schools needed to be brought closer to the people. This was not an easy task as the heritage left by the colonizer was very meagre. In 1959, for example, Sudan (Mali) had 351 schools with 1,183 classes. In these classes, 54,136 pupils were studying at the basic level out of a school-age population of 569,700. At the secondary level there were 1,080 pupils and at the higher level 111 students in France and at Dakar. The

percentage of enrolment amongst the school-age population was 9.5%, the lowest in French West Africa.

However, with the help of the Soviet Union the reform soon bore fruit, as the shown in Table 1.

Table 1. School enrolment at basic level, 1959-1968 (*end of rule of Modibo Keita*)

Year	No. of classes	No. of pupils in1st cycle	No. of pupils in 2nd cycle	% of school population enrolled
1959	1 183	54136	1080	9.5%
1962	1 504	67643	4987	
1964	2233	102851	17044	19%
1968	4298	156967	29055	22.4%

The percentage enrolled in schools rose from 9.5% to 22.4% in nine years, a remarkable achievement. And yet this success was short-lived. Galloping population growth and economic difficulties created a gap between the people and the ruling US-RDA party. The schools suffered the effects of this.

In 1968 the military took power and the quest for lasting solutions to the education crisis began. With this aim in mind, Malian schools underwent numerous reforms (in 1970, 1978, 1985). In 1978 the government allocated 14% of the national budget to education. Despite these efforts the schools continued to decline. Student strikes became more common. They were put down without mercy. Teachers in some areas went months without being paid. To find a means of livelihood they migrated to neighbouring countries such as Ivory Coast and Gabon, to mention only two. This migration was called 'the brain drain'. Currently the UNDP Tokten programme is funding the participation of this diaspora in building the country. Between 1968 and 1991 the school enrolment ratio varied between 18.9% and 27.56%.

The basic level of education is made up of two cycles:

- the first cycle lasting six years which ends with an examination and the issuing of the Certificate of Primary Studies (CEP);

- the second cycle of three years which also ends with an examination and the issuing of a Diploma of Basic Studies.

These two cycles constitute the basis of education in Mali. In 1995 they comprised

1,523 public schools and 209 private ones for the first cycle and 264 public and 17 private for the second cycle. In the same year, there were 552,891 pupils, an average of 52 to 69 pupils per class and the first cycle had 8,162 teachers.

Education at the secondary level lasts three years in the lycées and two to four years in the professional schools. The lycées prepare pupils for university entrance; a pupil specializes either in the sciences or in the humanities. The professional schools offer training in such subjects as accountancy, building, business studies, etc.

Since 1991 there have been many seminars on education; recommendations have been made and they are in the process of being implemented. For example, in 1996 an action plan was adopted to reduce the repetition rate from 30% to 15%, and to reach a school enrolment rate of 50%.

With regard to what has been achieved, it can be said that major efforts are currently being made to increase the number of schools. At the secondary level, in the framework of the creation of schools, five lycées (academic secondary schools) were opened between 1995 and 1997, bringing the number of lycées to 19. But as for the quality of education, it is generally agreed that it is deteriorating. The repetition rate remains high (28%), as does the rate of exclusion. In 1995, the pass rate at the end of the first cycle examination was 59% and for the second cycle, 47.97%. These figures compare with around 12% in both cycles in 1987, 49% and 35% in 1988 and 58% and 41% in 1994.

Today, amongst the many problems that Malian schools are facing, the most serious one remains strikes. Since 1991 these strikes have meant that schools have not been able to get through the curriculum. Let us be objective - there is no point drawing up valuable curricula that can take schools to a glorious future, if they cannot be fully implemented.

Information provision

Libraries in Mali have tended to be privileged places of cultural development and to be concentrated in Bamako, the capital. There school pupils have access to the libraries provided by the French and American Cultural Centres, specialist children's libraries and the National Library. In 1977, OLP (Opération Lecture Publique - Operation Popular Reading) was launched. It is a Franco-Malian project, supported financially by French cooperation services, located in the Division of Cultural Heritage, within the National Directorate of Arts and Culture. Its aim is to promote reading throughout Mali, by setting up a public library in each of the 46 circles (administrative divisions) into which Mali was then divided and to train librarians to manage the libraries.

Small reading and activity centres for children have been set up by OLP in some

localities, but their functioning is not very effective. More successful in meeting the needs of children has been a project establishing centres for reading and child activity (CLAEC - Centres de Lecture et d'Animation pour les Enfants). Restricted to Bamako, it is the result of a twinning agreement with Angers in France. That town has created and equipped, in the six communes of Bamako, six CLAECs. The communes, on their part, agree to upkeep the premises, provide staff and maintain the services. There is a management committee in each commune. The libraries are well used by school children from the first cycle. There are also children's libraries within the enclosure of the National Library (initiated by OLP) and the French Cultural Centre.

The National Library is open to all. Home loan is possible on registration. An examination of loan records over a fortnight showed that some 35 loans had been made by school pupils, mainly from nearby lycées and predominantly by those studying the sciences.

School libraries

The earliest schools in the French Sudan (Mali) came into existence at the end of the 19th century. With the advent of Independence in 1960 and especially after the 1962 reform, these schools were reformed and adapted to the new demands. For example, the College Technique became the Lycée Technique, the école d'Administration du Soudan the Ecole Nationale d'Administration. Naturally, new schools were built. But it was not until the 1970s that the first school libraries appeared. Today, a look at what has happened to these libraries leads us to a bitter conclusion. For schools at the basic level, libraries are virtually non-existent. The few information units that do exist in them lack suitable premises. Nor are they managed by professional librarians. The libraries of the first and second cycles of basic education are often made up of 50 to a 100 items kept in a cupboard or two in the head's office. Use of them amounts to no more than the distribution of such items as are available amongst pupils at the beginning of the school year. The number of items is totally insufficient, and so one textbook is given to two or even three pupils whose families live near one another. The pupils, usually those in examination classes, who thus enjoy an annual home loan, must return the items borrowed before the last tests. The holdings of libraries are enriched by gifts from twinned towns or schools. There is minimal participation by the Ministry of Basic Education in the constitution of these information units.

At the secondary level, the situation is less dramatic. Most institutions at this level have a library. There are however a few exceptions. Amongst these, mention might be made of Lycée D. Konaré in Kayes, whose library was burned down by the pupils in 1996, the five new lycées and some private lycées (Lycée Konary, for example). But these libraries suffer from the same problems as their counterparts at the basic level, that is:

- lack of suitable premises;
- total lack of a budget;
- lack of a professional librarian;
- lack of chances for in-service training opportunities for librarians;
- lack of co-operation between them and international bodies or bodies in other countries.

Relations with the outside world are limited to those maintained with twinned towns or schools. Most of the librarians in the basic and secondary cycles are unaware of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and therefore have never enjoyed the services of that body. Although the libraries of the secondary level are members of AMBAD (Association Malienne des Bibliothécaires, Archivistes et Documentalistes - Malian Association of Librarians, Archivists and Documentalists), this association has been able to achieve little for lack of funds.

Methodology

The library collections of Ecole Nationale d'Administration, Centre Djoliba, and the National Office for Statistics and Information were searched for general information on Mali and on its education system.

Interviews were made with the directors of studies, librarians and pupils of those lycées which had been selected for case studies. Information was also obtained from pupils with the help of a questionnaire, designed for that purpose.

In fact nothing has been written about school libraries in Mali. It is hoped that this research will provide a basis for further research.

'A library in every school' programme

This new programme aims to establish libraries in schools at the basic level, where, as we have seen, there is little or no access to reading materials.

Origins

Until the 1990s there was no planned creation of libraries at the basic level. It is only in the last few years that OLP, which had already achieved its main targets in the public library field, began creating some libraries in schools, with the support of the local population. In this way twenty libraries were built and equipped all over the country. Among them mention may be made of the library in the school at Missira in Bamako.

But OLP, which does not come under the Ministry of National Education, could not carry on creating libraries in schools. A farther reason was the fact that the OLP had insufficient funds since it depended on the French Co-operation Mission. That is why it felt it necessary to combine its efforts with those of the Ministry of Education where the idea of 'A library in every school' had already taken root. But in doing so, the original concept of the Ministry of Education was considerably improved. Whilst initially it consisted of equipping each school with a book cupboard, it now means the creation of a library in the full sense of the word.

OLP contacted the French Co-operation Mission to have the funding for the new project. The Mission approved the request and a protocol of agreement was signed between it, the Ministry of Basic Education, the OLP and the Comité Editorial Bamakois (CEBA) on 15 March 1997. The OLP provides the technical aspect of the programme. A Cell responsible for the Management of Libraries in Basic Schools was set up. For a start, given the shortage of funds, the Cell set the short-term target of creating ten school libraries. Criteria were laid down for designating the schools that would be the first to benefit from these libraries. This programme is the first government structure for libraries at the basic level of education.

Criteria

In order to benefit from the creation of a library within the school, the latter must meet the following conditions:

- it must have first and second cycles;
- the local population must provide:

  - appropriate premises to house the library
  - twenty chairs and two reading tables
  - two sets of shelves;

- the school must nominate a librarian from among the teachers.

Through the Cell, the programme looks after the training in documentary techniques of the teacher who is nominated. It also endows the library with 255 books and ensures the co-ordination of all the libraries in the network.

Despite these constraining conditions for schools and their localities, demand for libraries has been very strong. The people have shown themselves happy to commit themselves to the programme and they have done so to the satisfaction of the programme decision-makers. An example of this commitment is Torokorobougou, a

district of Bamako, which equipped a splendid room for its school library, costing over US$2,000.

Finance

On the one hand, the programme is funded by the French Co-operation Mission. This institution has shown itself to be very interested in the development of documentation and information in Mali. It funds the OLP and the whole network of libraries that this embraces. The Réseau Malien de Documentation (REMADOC) is also dependent on it. For 'A library in every school' programme, the Mission made available to the Cell a sum of 15 million CFA Francs (US$30,000). Of this sum 53.5% (8 million CFA Francs) will be devoted to the purchase of books. The rest will be invested in training librarians and in creating, equipping and operating the Cell.

On the other hand, the programme is supported financially by the people. This support from the people is vital if the programme's objectives are to be attained rapidly. This support need not be limited to satisfying the conditions laid down for schools to benefit from the creation of a library (chairs, tables, book shelves etc.). The localities can go further if they have the means, for example by buying books on the spot. For that they could draw not only on their own resources but also on those of people from the areas who live in the big cities or overseas.

Current state of libraries in the programme

In less than a year after the launch of the programme, the people have made considerable efforts in providing facilities. According to the person in charge of the Cell, Mr Tamboura, the ten libraries scattered across the country are already equipped. The librarians have all been through the training course. The first supply of 2,550 books is available at the Cell and will soon be delivered to the libraries. Of the books ordered, 18.4%, 470 books, were provided by Malian publishers (Figuier, Jamana, DNAFLA, etc.). This not only supports the country's publishing industry but at the same time reduces the proportion of books not adapted to Malian realities. The ten libraries are expected to be operational by March 1998. The first, at Torokorobougou was opened on 3 February 1998.

It should be noted that the distribution of the first libraries is uneven. As shown in Table 2, of the eight regions of Mali, only schools in five will receive a library in this first phase of the programme. The regions of Gao, Tombouctou (Timbuktu) and Kidal do not appear. It is hoped that the second phase which envisages the creation of 20 new libraries will fill this gap.

Table 2. Distribution of first libraries in the 'A library in every school' project

District/Region	Locality/Quarter	Name of beneficiary school
Bamako	Torokorobougou	Ecole fondamentale de Torokorobougou
Kayes	Diamou	Ecole fondamentale de Diamou
	Seguela	Ecole fondamentale de Seguela
Koulikoro	Yelekebougou	Ecole fondamentale de Yelekebougou
Sikasso	Niéna	Ecole fondamentale de Niéna
	Kléla	Ecole fondamentale de Kléla
Ségou	Séribala	Ecole fondamentale de Séribala
Mopti	Dia	Ecole fondamentale de Dia
	Hombori	Ecole fondamentale de Hombori
	Sévaré	Ecole fondamentale de Sévaré

Evaluation

The libraries are not yet operational and it is therefore not possible to provide data on user satisfaction, impact or long term sustainability. What however is apparent at this point is that the population, the teachers and the pupils much appreciate and encourage the establishment of libraries in the schools. All are aware of the importance of libraries and reading in the educational system. That is why, when talking about the low intellectual level of pupils, the parents all say that they do not read. This absence of a reading culture, especially at the basic level, is due not to a lack of will on the part of pupils but to the non-existence of access to reading materials. In a country such as Mali, where parents' income is quite inadequate to build up personal libraries for their children, the establishment of school libraries is bound to be supported.

On the other hand 'A library in every school' project is very ambitious given the state's rather limited means. Ten schools now have libraries; another 20 are planned. But there are over 1,700 schools at the first cycle and around 280 at the second cycle. And the creation of libraries in itself is meaningless if every effort is not made to supply them regularly with up-to-date items and materials and to ensure the continued training of their librarians. It is for that reason that the Cell is currently seeking sponsors (NGOs, national or international associations, foundations etc.) and donors. It hopes to establish fruitful and diversified long-term co-operation with them. Self-sustainability is not envisaged.

Libraries at the secondary level

Libraries of three secondary schools were examined.

Library of Lycée Askia Mohammed (formal name: Bibliothèque du Lycée Askia Mohammed)

Lycée Askia Mohammed (LAM) is one of the leading educational institutions in Mali. It was established in 1915, long before Independence. Situated in Bamako, it is certainly the country's largest lycée. In 1997/98, Lycée Askia Mohammed had 2,170 pupils who are being taught by 87 teachers.

Despite several investigations, it has not been possible to establish the exact date of the establishment of the library at LAM. But according to some sources, it was set up in the 1970s. The LAM library is, of course, intended to meet the information needs of the pupils, teachers and administrative staff of the body which runs it.

Collection development

The collection is very poor. It only totals 991 items, equal to 0.45 items per pupil. Subject distribution is given in Table 3. All areas are covered

The library does not subscribe to any serials.

The book stock increases essentially through gifts which are by definition irregular. It is therefore impossible to say by how much it is rising each year. According to one of the librarians, Mrs Coulibaly Dady, the library used to receive 300 items a year in the framework of the BSU (Bibliothèques Scolaires et Universitaires) project initiated in 1984 by OLP and the Department of National Education; but this project ended three years ago and since then the library has not received any items. In fact over two-thirds of the stock is made up of items from the 1970s and 1980s.

Staffing

There are two full-time librarians. They were trained on OLP's 15 day introduction to library management. They have not been on any training course since 1994.

Physical facilities

The reading room is very small. It is poorly equipped and has only 51 chairs, nine reading tables and three cupboards. That means it cannot even accommodate one-twentieth of the pupils. The books are arranged on five metal shelves. There is no manual card index for users. A loan desk is situated at the entrance to the library. The library has no typewriter which, had it existed, would have been of great help in

preparing bibliographical slips and drafting correspondence.

Table 3. LAM library collection by subject

Subject	Number of items
General	143
Philosophy	80
Social sciences	118
Religion	3
Botany	7
Languages, linguistics	40
Exact sciences	170
Applied sciences	87
Zoology	9
Arts - fine arts, decorative arts	16
Music	12
Literature (including novels)	62
Leisure activities	24
History and geography	220
Total	991

Services

There is direct access to the collection. For the pupils, all they have to do is present their valid student card in order to use the library's services. Users from outside the institution who are not pupils are required to present a valid civil card. The library is open when students are in class.

Despite the poverty of the library, use of the collection is regular and encouraging. The two librarians receive an average of 60 visitors a day. They give 37-43 consultations a day on the spot. There is not much home lending given the lack of stock and the desire to enable the maximum number of readers to benefit from the library's services. Lending is chiefly to teachers for the preparation of their courses.

The library does not produce any bibliography or leaflet to give readers information about its collection. The library is not computerized. There is no photocopier or binding

equipment. That means that the library has no source of income.

User satisfaction

A user survey was conducted on 30 pupils and 10 teachers. Readers were not satisfied with their library. Findings included:

- 98% felt that the collection was very poor. They also asserted that the little that does exist is too old to meet the needs of the late 20th century;

- 5% of those questioned said that the inability of the librarians to answer their questions satisfactorily has made them not come to the library. But, to be fair, the poor response to users' questions is not dependent solely on the intellectual ability of the librarian but also and above all on the quality of the collection, the level of co-operation between libraries and the means of communication available. To give a good reply it is of course necessary to know all about the collection and how to exploit sources of information (catalogues, manual card indexes, etc.) but information on what does not exist or which exists in other libraries can only be given if the means of doing so (union catalogue, database of a network of libraries, etc.) is available;

- 61% stated that they were put off by the library's opening hours and by their irregularity. It has to be admitted that many librarians at the secondary level do not respect the opening times that they themselves set. Systematic lateness and early closing of libraries constitute a serious handicap for good user relations. Factors such as the lack of interest in the library on the part of the school authorities promote this behaviour on the part of librarians;

- no user questioned had received any training whatsoever on how to use libraries. (It should be pointed out that bibliography is only taught in the Faculty of Legal and Economic Sciences and the Faculty of Medicine);

- the teachers approached all thought that the collection was very poor. The available items are read and re-read each year in order to give classes. That means that it is impossible for even the teachers to keep their knowledge up to date, let alone the pupils who are completely dependent on their notebooks. Because of the lack of documents, lectures cannot be given regularly.

To sum up, the findings of the survey showed that the most serious problems of the

LAM library remain the poverty of the collection, the lack of opportunities for training and further training for librarians and the lack of co-operation with other libraries at the secondary level.

Library of the Lycée des Jeunes Filles (Lycée Ba Aminata Diallo)

The Lycée des Jeunes Filles (Girls' Lycée) was set up on 4 February 1951. It is situated in Bamako. In 1997/98 there were 1,789 pupils, taught by 88 teachers, including both permanent and contract teachers.

Collection development

According to the stock register there are estimated to be 2,851 items. However, this figure needs to be revised downwards as the stock register does not reflect losses and withdrawals of items. Of this total number of items, 2,451 books have been recorded, processed and arranged in cupboards. The rest (400 books), after being recorded, were directly put on the shelves. The latter are made up solely of textbooks and are lent to students for home use during the school year. The collection covers such subjects as history, geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, languages (French, English, German, Russian), linguistics and philosophy.

The library has no budget of its own. It can therefore make no purchases of items even annually. The collection increases thanks to gifts. The chief donors are:

- OLP. In the framework of the BSU project, OLP used to give libraries 300 items a year. That project came to an end in 1994 and since then the library of the Lycée des Jeunes Filles no longer has a source for acquiring items;

- The Fondation Partage. In 1997 it made a gift of over 100 items to the library. These items deal with general culture. This same gesture was made to other school libraries and even to a number of university of libraries.

Staffing

The library is managed on a day to day basis by three librarians, all teachers by training. These librarians attended a fortnight-long course given by OLP in 1985 and 1986. Since then none of them has attended any, course provided by any source whatsoever.

Physical facilities

The library consists of a single room, which was renovated in 1986 by OLP. It is equipped with six reading tables, 36 chairs, six shelves, two cupboards and two work posts. A loan book keeps a check of home loans.

There is direct access to the collection and so there is no manual card index for users. Materials (pens, sticking tape, glue, covering, cards, labels etc.) are supplied by OLP and the school management.

Services

The library receives 30 - 40 visitors a day. It used to lend books on home loan for the whole school year. Such loans were recorded in the textbook register in which the name of the borrower was entered. Home loans have been halted because of the endless transfers of students and teachers to other establishments.

All readers may consult items on the spot. The busiest times continue to be the break and recreation times. However, the library is only open during school hours, 8.00 AM - midday and 3.00 PM - 5.00 PM.

User satisfaction

Group interviews and a survey were conducted to assess satisfaction with the stock and services of the library. It emerges from the findings that the collection is well used. Some textbooks are consulted two to four times a day. According to the loan register the use to which the collection is put is very high (80%).

Despite that, the percentage of dissatisfied users remained high:

- 90% considered the collection lacked the books they required. Because of this, the pupils cannot meet all the demands of academic life. For example, the lecture topics in lycées in literature are: the meeting of cultures, colonization, money, etc. It appears that none of these topics is sufficiently covered by the collection. This means that the teacher is forced to give the students more time so that everyone can read the one or two items recommended for the lecture. This state of affairs does not allow teachers to do the maximum of practical work so as to underpin the students' theoretical knowledge;

- 25% criticized the opening hours. They do not suit the readers. The fact that the library's opening hours are identical with those of classes makes it impossible for pupils to consult items on the spot. Home loans are not allowed and, even if they were, they would not have enabled all users to

have access to the items that they want, because of the insufficient quantity of stock; available sources of information and the lack of co-operation amongst libraries at the secondary level.

Library of the Lycée Technique

The Lycée Technique came into existence in 1962 following the reform of the College Technique, which had also been created in 1948 by the colonial government. The Lycée Technique is currently an institution with a good reputation. In 1997/98 it had 1,315 pupils. Courses are given by 94 teachers, of whom 24 are on contract.

Collection development

The library is estimated to contain 6,232 items, spread amongst subjects ranging from history and geography, reading, technology, mathematics, physics and chemistry. The collection is made up essentially of books (98%), but there are a few journals: *Le Courier, Cacao, Deutschland, Les Temps Nouveaux,* etc. The library does not subscribe to them, and they are not acquired on a regular basis. In addition to journals and books there are also 'bandes dessinées' (similar to comic strip books).

The collection is predominantly in French. However, there are a few items in English and German.

The collection is increasing thanks to gifts from OLP (the BSU project), the city of Angers (France), CODE (Canadian Organization for Development through Education) and individuals.

Staffing

There is one librarian, who reports to the Director of Studies.

Physical facilities

The library is not computerized. The room has 72 seats and 14 reading tables. The books are kept in cupboards against the wall, with the journals (about fifty in number) displayed in two display units.

Services

There is a functioning loan service. The library of the Lycée Technique grants home loans to a small group of readers made up mostly of teachers and administrative staff. Home loans are made for up to a fortnight.

As for consultation on the spot, it can be done on all opening days. There is direct access to the collection. Visits are recorded daily in a register. Table 4 gives an extract from this register:

Table 4. Visits to the library of Lycée Technique over two weeks

Date	No. visits	No. pupils	No. teachers	No. others
17-11-1997	83	82	1	
18-11-1997	101	98	3	
19-11-1997	84	84		
20-11-1997	143	131	8	4
21-11-1997	68	64	4	
24-11-1997	54	45	9	
25-11-1997	52	52		
26-11-1997	106	99	6	1
27-11-1997	42	42		
28-11-1997	103	100	1	2
Total	836	797	32	7

The library receives an average of 83 readers a day, a satisfactory figure. The library of the Lycée Technique leaves a very good impression on all its visitors. Its organization, the decorations on the wall, the reception by the librarian, the relative quality of the collection are certainly enough to explain the rate of use. The room is always full and quite quiet.

User satisfaction

The users of the library of the Lycée Technique already have a reading culture. The academic demands are high and mastery of technology requires a great deal of research and hence of reading. Each day readers flock to the library. And the librarian is stretched to the limit. She cannot single-handed make home loans and loans on the spot, watch the readers to make sure that they do not leave with items, process the few documents that she receives, etc. Physically, she cannot manage given the number of visitors each day (83 visitors). That is why she has long been trying to get her school management and the school authorities in general to recruit another librarian so that together they can spend more time with readers and speed up the service.

The results of a user survey show that:

- 52.7% are satisfied with the library's services;

- 80% claim that, only by increasing and improving the collection, can the library fully meet its readers' information needs;

- 78% (the teachers above all) desire subscriptions to journals. As it is a library specialized in technology, the lack of subscriptions to scientific and technological journals is a major handicap. This gap must be filled in order to achieve quality training in technology.

An interview with the Director of Studies of the Lycée revealed that four key problems are hampering the proper operation of the library:

- the smallness of the premises;

- the lack of an autonomous budget making it impossible to supply the library with items and materials on a regular basis;

- the lack of opportunity for in-service training for the librarian;

- the lack of a national policy to recruit specialist librarians.

Conclusion

In the course of this research on school libraries in Mali, four main problems were detected. These are:

- the lack of a budget. This results in the libraries being almost totally dependent on external aid and gifts of books and materials;

- the non-existence of spacious and suitable premises to house libraries. All the libraries visited in the framework of this study are contained in classrooms. The cupboards are in most cases against the wall and the chairs are arranged in the middle of the room for readers. This means that the latter are often inconvenienced by library business such as the stamping of new acquisitions;

- the lack of opportunities for the training and farther training of library

staff. Virtually all the librarians at the secondary level are teachers. They have attended OLP's fortnight-long course but that course by itself cannot enable them to master all the techniques of documentation especially when it is never followed by other training either in the country or overseas.

Moreover, the government, taking refuge behind the constraints of the International Monetary Fund, is refusing to recruit young graduates who have specialized in librarianship. That would have made it possible to strengthen the existing staff and improve the quality of library services. What happens is that the schools continue to make transfers of secretaries out of their offices and of teachers out of their classrooms to libraries. While that makes it possible to reduce the rate of recruitment of young graduates into the civil service, it creates and fosters incompetence in the management of libraries. The government seems not to understand that no speciality can replace another, if supplementary training is not given. And if that is true, why offer this supplementary training, when state-trained specialists exist?

- the total absence of a national documentation policy. Since Independence, Mali has not drawn up or implemented any national policy in the area of documentation. Both school and public libraries have always been created piecemeal. Worse still, no reliable regulations governing librarians have yet been adopted. It is true that there was an attempt to do so, but the result is good only for the archives. No school or university library has a set budget. Nor are there in any ministry sections responsible for managing, monitoring and coordinating the actions of libraries in an appropriate way.

Recommendations

In order to remedy the problems listed above, the following recommendations are made:

- each school library must be equipped with an autonomous budget. Failing which, it is desirable that in the budget of each institution having a library, provision is made for and a set figure allocated to the library;

- a library should be included in the architectural design of every future school. For schools that already exist it is vital to rearrange, enlarge and adapt their library to a suitable architectural design;

- the government and school authorities absolutely must do everything to ensure the further training of teacher librarians in particular and other librarians in general. Librarianship is an evolving science. Currently, it uses the contributions of disciplines such as computing, data communications, etc. And librarians must not find themselves left behind by this development. Otherwise the conservation and diffusion of information, the springboard for socio-economic development, will suffer greatly. Channels to ensure the training and further training of librarians exist, but they are not exploited. Co-operation with European universities, for example, should not be limited to courses for Malian teachers in these institutions. Librarians should have the chance to go and get further training in the libraries of those universities. In addition, each year, study bursaries are granted by international associations, foundations etc. But, for lack of a national information centre, the information does not reach the librarians who so need it. Finally, potentials for training exist within the country. The Ministry can organize training courses whose animator would be a specialist from within the country or abroad. Courses in the framework of twinning arrangements should also not be forgotten. It is only by exploiting these channels that our librarians will get further training, benefit from the experience of Europe and perhaps other continents and improve their view of librarianship. Recruitment of young graduates for all these reasons must be a priority if we want to have professional librarianship;

- the preparation of a national documentation policy whose broad lines will be: planning and creating libraries, providing libraries with an operating budget, recruiting and training of librarians, creating a national centre for the acquisition and distribution of documents, determining for each type of library a central one and finally book promotion;

- in every documentation policy, especially at the level of the basic schools, and especially in this period of decentralization and economic constraints, there must be maximum involvement of the population. The establishment and maintenance of school libraries requires a partnership between the government and the people.

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Chapter four - Classroom libraries: South Africa

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Thuli Radebe

Background

Socio-economic and political context

The Republic of South Africa occupies the southern extremity of the African continent, covering a total area of 1,219,080 sq. km (Hutcheson 1998: 944). It has common borders with Namibia in the north-west, with Botswana in the north, and with Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Swaziland in the north-east, whilst Lesotho, lying within the eastern part of the Republic, is entirely surrounded by South African territory (Hutcheson 1998: 944). Since the new dispensation of 1994, the country comprises nine provinces, namely, the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, North West, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Northern Province.

According to preliminary estimates of the size of the population of South Africa produced by the Central Statistical Services (CSS) in October 1996, there are approximately 37.9 million people in South Africa. This figure surprised the CSS which had projected approximately 42.1 million in 1996 (CSS 1997: 4). It was the first time that all the people of South Africa were counted as members of a united democratic nation (CSS 1997: 7). By province, in millions, 7.7 are in KwaZulu-Natal; 7.2 in

Gauteng; 5.9 in Eastern Cape; 4.1 in Northern Province; 4.1 in Western Cape; 3.0 in North West; 2.6 in Mpumalanga; 2.5 in Free State; and 0.7 in Northern Cape. The same estimates inform us that more than half (55.4%) of the estimated population of South Africa lives in urban rather than non-urban areas. Of the 37.9 million people, 18.2 million (48%) are male, and 19.7 million female (52%).

South Africa's Gross National Income, measured at average 1993-95 prices, according to the estimates of the World Bank reported by Hutcheson (1998: 956), was US$130,918 million, equivalent to US$3,160 *per capita.*

Krige *et al.* (1995: 76) reported that, with a few exceptions, people are 'very badly off in the former homelands and independent states, particularly the former Transkei and parts of KwaZulu-Natal which are both the poorest and most educationally disadvantaged areas in South Africa, whilst the Western Cape and Gauteng are substantially better off than the rest of the country.

Most South Africans are under-educated and under-prepared for full participation in social, economic and civic life (Krige *et al.* 1995: 79). The conclusion was that whites, with small families and high rates of employment are generally well off; Indians are also relatively well off, with moderate incomes prevailing in high density areas, especially in KwaZulu-Natal.

As many scholars of South Africa are now well aware, the corning to power of the Nationalist Party in 1948 brought with it a number of political changes. Key amongst these are the Group Areas and the Population Registration Acts of 1950 which classified people into four main population groups (whites, blacks, coloureds and Indians). Acquisition of land was restricted to areas designated for the different groups whilst the Bantu Authorities Act no 68 of 1951 created homelands (which functioned as politically 'independent' states) to provide land for the various black ethnic groups. However these states were re-incorporated into a unitary South Africa on 27 April 1994. The impact of these changes is explained by Nkomo (1991) and Kaniki (1997).

The national assembly of the new Government of National Unity under the presidency of Nelson Mandela comprises 400 seats of which the African National Congress (ANC), the ruling party, has 252 after obtaining 63% of the vote in 1994. Since the new 'democratically' elected government came into power a number of human rights have been extended to all racial, ethnic and religious groups in the country and new ones added. The country is still undergoing transformation with numerous transition problems due to the damage caused by apartheid. The extent of this damage becomes clear in the following discussions.

Education policies and practices

Number of schools and school enrolment

The Education Foundation (1997: 3) recorded 27,188 schools in the whole of South Africa. Each of the nine provinces is divided into regions which are further divided into districts and circuits. For instance, the Pietermaritzburg Region in the KwaZulu-Natal Province has six districts, one of which has a total of 646 public schools.

Regarding pupil enrolment, CSS (1996) estimated 11,869,000 pupils: 852,000 in the Western Cape; 2,331,000 in the Eastern Cape; 198,000 in Northern Cape; 777,000 in the Free State; 2,572,000 in KwaZulu-Natal; 916,000 in North West Province; 1,414,000 in Gauteng; 915,000 in Mpumalanga; 1,918,000 in Northern Province. De Villiers (1997: 80) estimated that more than 400,000 pupils annually enter that part of the school system (the former black departments) which has a history of inefficiency and low pass rates and which appears to lack a learning culture.

Krige *et al.* (1995: 79) referred to some estimates which put the number of 'out of school' children in South Africa as high as 2.5 million, with between 25% and 74% of African children in large areas of the country being out of school.

Historical overview of education

Nkomo (1990: 1) pointed out the qualitative change which was brought about by the accession of the Nationalist Party to power in 1948. He explained that segregated and inferior education was legislated for Africans in 1953 by the Bantu Education Act, for coloureds in 1963 and for Indians in 1965, providing an ideological cornerstone for the social segregation, economic exploitation and political oppression of these groups to varying degrees, according to race.

Kaniki (1997: 3) reported that the Tricameral Parliament came into effect, alongside the homeland system, through the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act of 1983. This parliament comprised three chambers to serve all interests, including education, of three groups. These were the House of Assembly (HOA) to serve the white population, the House of Representatives (HOR) to serve the coloured and the House of Delegates (HOD) to serve Indians. By the same Act of 1983, blacks in the self-governing territories outside the borders of South Africa ran their own education systems under 'own affairs'. A separate Department of Education and Training (DET) administered black education within the borders of South Africa although this was the portfolio of the Minister in the Cabinet attached to the House of Assembly (Kaniki 1997: 3).

The dispensation described above gave birth to 15 Ministries of Education (some sources estimate 19) in South Africa (Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse 1996: 6; de Villiers 1997: 79). These existed until the first democratic elections of 1994 which led

to the establishment of a single Ministry of Education. The 15 Ministries and their Departments were differentiated along racial and ethnic lines in accordance with the apartheid system and philosophy of Christian National Education which entrenched the unequal allocation of educational resources. One of the aims of apartheid education given by Nkomo (1990: 2) encapsulates the deliberate destructiveness of this system, that is, 'to promote black intellectual underdevelopment by minimizing the educational resources for blacks while maximizing them for whites'. People were brainwashed to believe that the Divine Will had created the Native as a perpetual 'drawer of water and a hewer of wood and that it would be contrary to God's will to change his lot' (Kutoane and Kruger 1990: 9). People were farther threatened with punishment from God if they interfered with that plan by raising the Native from that position.

Although compulsory school education for whites was introduced as early as 1905, it was not legislated for all the other race groups until much later (de Villiers 1997: 76). Baine and Mwamwenda confirmed that education was free and compulsory for all white children for the first ten years; was compulsory since 1979 and 1980 respectively for Asian and coloured children; was neither free nor compulsory for black children (Baine and Mwamwenda 1994: 121) until the passing of the South African Schools Act in 1996 as noted by de Villiers (1997: 76). In their mapping of educational provision in the past, Krige *et al.* (1995: 76) noted:

'gross neglect of African education in the past. The education of coloured people has been relatively better but there are several aspects of serious concern, while education provision for Indians and whites especially is satisfactory.'

In support of the foregoing, de Villiers (1997: 80) noted the inadequate supply of books and other facilities, and a drastic shortage of well-qualified teachers. Sidiropoulos (1997: 183) and Krige *et al.* (1995: 78) reported an enormous shortage of classrooms countrywide. For instance, a shortage of 15,000 classrooms was recorded in KwaZulu-Natal alone in 1995; about 58,600 pupils in Gauteng were without classrooms in 1996; whilst a shortage of 5,000 classrooms was noted in Mpumalanga in 1996 (Sidiropoulos 1997: 183).

Krige *et al.* (1995: 78) set the national average in pupil/teacher ratios at 41:1, the average coloured pupil/teacher ratio being 23:1, that of Indians being 22:1, whilst there are many districts in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape with pupil/teacher ratios of more than 46:1. In the former Transkei, for instance, almost all districts have between 48 and 100 pupils per classroom whereas worse scenarios have been revealed informally by education authorities and teachers in KwaZulu-Natal, with some ratios around and in excess of 70:1 (Gwala[1] 1997). On a positive note Sidiropoulos (1997: 197) has subsequently stated that national goals in this area are 40:1 and 35:1 in primary and secondary schools respectively, to be reached by April 2000.

De Villiers (1997: 80) observed that in addition to the role that schools played in dismantling apartheid, they have also played a major role in undermining a learning culture in South Africa. Manifestations of this breakdown in the learning culture were described by Karlsson (1996: 8), from another source, as characterized by the late arrival of pupils and teachers, early departures, class dodging, truancy and even basking in the sun. A level of apathy in both teachers and pupils is also observable.

Bane and Mwamwenda (1994: 123) observed more extreme and intractable problems in *rural areas* because of greater poverty, geographical and political isolation, fewer employment options, feelings of dependency, exacerbated by additional layers of bureaucracy and traditional authoritarianism, along with resistance to change.

Philosophy of education

Higgs (1997: 100) traced the theoretical foundations of the educational policies which led to the already described fragmentation along racial and ethnic lines to the influence of Fundamental Pedagogics (FP), which was the dominant philosophical discourse in education in apartheid South Africa. Taylor (1993: 3) reported a view that FP was more about socialization than philosophy, and more about instilling passive acceptance of authority than providing students with the conceptual tools necessary for creative and independent thought. Furthermore Higgs (1994: 90;1997: 100) concluded that FP restrained the learner from participating critically in learning interaction (Higgs 1994: 90), thus instilling a spirit of intolerance, and an unwillingness to accommodate divergent perspectives and points of view. This feature strongly characterizes South African political debate today.

The shortcomings/deficiencies of teachers, including their lack of information handling skills, have been pointed out by a number of authors (Stadler 1992; READ 1993; Radebe 1994; Behrens 1995). Radebe (1994: 43) revealed how some of the teachers who register for the Diploma in School Librarianship were incapable of locating and accessing information, analyzing and synthesizing this information and formulating their own opinions. READ (1996: 19) observed that most teachers confessed to a lack of confidence in their own English language proficiency. The problem was clearly conceptualized by READ (1993) reporting that:

'...their professional training has not stressed the importance of reading, or equipped them to involve pupils in the learning process'.

In support, Olën (1995 in Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse 1996: 11) noted the inadequate curriculum in training colleges which does not make taking courses in information skills compulsory, so as to equip teachers-in-training with skills to integrate information skills with their subject teaching.

It is argued that a new philosophical discourse in education is needed in South Africa to liberate South Africa's philosophy of education from ideological hegemony (Higgs 1997: 100) and to bring out a philosophy of education that is open and critical, and which encourages learning, enquiry, discussion and ongoing debate (Higgs 1997: 105). Correspondingly, the *White Paper on Education and Training* (South Africa 1995: 31) stipulated that courses for teachers should equip them with skills to select and use a wide variety of resources, employ methods which cultivate independence in learning, and which demand on-going growth in reading competence. This is in line with Bane and Mwamwenda's recommendation (1994: 126) for curricula which promote reflective education that goes beyond rote learning, while teaching students to critically evaluate the acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, as well as methods of problem-solving, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of knowledge. This is consistent with Kuhlthau's recommendation (1993: 11) of the constructivist view of learning which involves students in learning through the use of a variety of resources. Since this perspective requires access to a wide range of materials for learning, it advocates developing information skills for learning from a variety of sources. The opposite view would be the transmission one which involves acquisition of factual knowledge delivered by the teacher, often called the 'the sage on the stage' method, or by predicted material from a textbook (Kuhlthau 1993: 11).

Curriculum 2005, the new national curriculum for the 21st Century, is based on the ideal of lifelong learning for all South Africans, according to Professor Bengu, the National Education Minister (South Africa. Department of Education (S.A. DoE 1997a). The new curriculum will effect a shift from a content-based to an outcomes-based education (OBE). One of the changes envisaged as a benefit of OBE in the classroom is that learners[2] will know how to collect, gather and organize information and conduct research (Isaacman 1996). It is possibly for this reason that Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse (1996: 13) argued that access to a wide range of learning resources is a critical and essential component of the new educational paradigm and not an optional luxury. One principle which informs the OBE curriculum, and which impacts on the school library and the provision of learning resources is that of learner-centredness (S.A. DoE 1997b). This principle prescribes that the development of learning programmes and materials should put learners first, thus implying different learning styles and rates of learning and teaching to accommodate all types of learners. The role of the school library in this area is therefore to provide learning resources for different phases and levels to meet the pace and needs of each learner (S.A. DoE 1997b). This further implies that educators have to be familiar with such learning resources and how they can be used in the learning environment. The OBE principle of relevance of the curriculum to the current and anticipated needs of the individual (amongst others) is contingent on individuals having skills to source, access, understand and manipulate information. To support this, the discussion document on school library provision standards (S.A. DoE 1997b) identified the school library as a suitable vehicle

to provide resources for learners and acquire basic skills. The question one may ask is: how can this be realized with the desperate shortage of school libraries in South Africa? The principle of promoting critical and creative thinking acknowledges the changing nature of knowledge and the need to accommodate all thoughts and interests of the learner. The strong implication for the school library is that it has to make available learning resources and materials which will accommodate diverse schools of thought and interests, which has not been the case in the past (S.A. DoE 1997b: 18). The document concluded that the most important implication is that school libraries are essential to effective teaching and learning in the country.

The foregoing appears to be positive on a theoretical level. However, it should be noted, as pointed out by de Villiers (1997: 80), that the new system is plagued by the same inefficiency problems as before. This is because the same teachers, who lack motivation and efficiency, and the same apartheid era administrative personnel are still running the system.

Information provision

The South African library and information system is described by the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) (1992: 7) as relatively well established with a variety of types of libraries which, at the end of 1991, were: school libraries; two national libraries; three legal deposit libraries; four provincial library services with numerous affiliated public libraries; 10 independent public libraries; 88 university, college and technikon libraries; 465 special libraries; 91 government department libraries; 10 'national' libraries in the previous homelands; and about 120 resource centres. Despite this well established system, Ferguson nearly 70 years ago (1929: 10) put into perspective the attitude which informed the exclusion of black people from even the most basic of these services:

'The South African is willing... for the native to carry his books to and from the library, but he would feel that an end of his regime was at hand if this same servant were permitted to open these books and read therein... ' (Ferguson 1929:10).

This statement reflects, to some extent, how long the problem of lack of library service provision to black people in South Africa has been in existence. It partially explains the extent to which deliberate damage has been inflicted on black people in this regard. A negligible number of libraries was available to black people from before and through the apartheid era both in the townships and in rural areas. The other races all had, in varying degrees but higher than blacks, access to public and school libraries. Indian and coloured townships were provided with public library facilities. The homelands were each provided with a 'national' library but with insufficient funding, some less than those of urban municipal public libraries (Stadler 1992: 45). This led to their

inefficiency and 'uselessness', although some of them attempted to service schools as well as function as local public libraries. This deprivation of black people of library facilities was part of a grand apartheid scheme of controlling access to information for black people to avoid 'poisoning' their minds against the government. The apartheid scheme described above was sustained by instituting an education system for black people which did not require exposure to extra information and its resources.

It was only after 1973 that some city public libraries opened to all races. These included the Natal Society Library, in Pietermaritzburg, in 1975 and the Durban Central Lending Library in 1980 (Radebe 1996b: 51). Public librarians around the country have seen an upsurge in the number of black people who are patronizing these libraries resulting in shortages of space in a number of instances. Many resource centres, according to Stadler (1992: 45) were established during the mid-1980s by non-governmental organizations as an attempt to fill the gaps in information provision created by apartheid structures. It is within the past three years that a number of public[3] libraries have been built by the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Library Services in black townships and rural areas, a development which has been welcomed with applause.

School library provision

The various education administrative departments were different even in the way they handled library and media matters (NEPI 1992: 9-10), with a few of the departments formulating a specific library policy. Schools administered by HOA and HOD education departments (and to a lesser extent the HOR department) had library policies with good library collections and equipment and which were supported by subject advisers. The DET, the single largest provider of schools for African learners, only officially acknowledged the role of school libraries in teaching and learning in 1983. Prior to this development, there was no legal imperative to provide school libraries or train teacher librarians for African schools, resulting in enormous backlogs and generations of African learners and adults who are library illiterates (NEPI 1992). Krige *et al.* (1990) reported that as many as 76% of all schools in KwaZulu were without libraries. Six years later the situation had not improved with Schroen (Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse 1996: 8) estimating that only 20% of schools have libraries in KwaZulu-Natal. In Soweto, of a total of 317 schools in 1992, only 80 (25%) had school libraries (Stadler 1992: 44), her further estimation being that R2.5 billion (US$587 million) would be required to provide all schools under its jurisdiction with a library.

Table 1. Number of schools and schools with libraries in South Africa. (*EduSource Data News, 17 August 1997*)

Province	No. of schools	No. of schools with libraries	% of schools with libraries

Eastern Cape	5880	433	7%
Free State	2881	341	12%
Gauteng	2233	983	44%
KwaZulu-Natal	5409	955	18%
Mpumalanga	1907	290	15%
Northern Cape	526	175	33%
Northern	4107	205	5%
North-west	2412	340	14%
Western Cape	1770	916	52%
TOTAL	**27188**	**4638**	**17%**

The Education Foundation (1997: 3) reported an alarming shortage of school libraries. Table 1 gives the number of schools with libraries by province. Out of a total of 27,188 schools, only 4,638 (17%) have libraries. This 17% is concentrated mostly in white and Indian schools and to a lesser extent in coloured schools. The Eastern Cape (7%) and Northern Province (5%) have the least number of libraries compared with 44% and 52% in Gauteng and Western Cape respectively. Since KwaZulu-Natal has the second largest number of schools and the largest number of pupils (CSS 1996), it is as poorly provisioned as the Eastern Cape.

It is estimated that it would cost approximately R450,000 (US$105,634) to build one school library with an area of 300 sq. m at a cost of R1,500 (US$352) per sq. m, based on the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Library Service building norms and costs as presented by Bawa (1996: 238). This excludes the stock which would make the figure even bigger. How much it would cost to provide each of the 22,550 schools (without libraries) with a library is unthinkable.

The entire education system, according to Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse (1996: 12) was also characterized by, amongst other things, people in positions of authority lacking an understanding of the relevance of learning resources in libraries. These authors summarized problems in the school library sector which were raised by a number of researchers: huge disparities in budgetary allocations between the different departments, giving rise to widespread absence of facilities, inadequate provision of materials, inadequate physical accommodation and lack of trained personnel, all evident in African schools; a lack of understanding of the role of information resources in teaching and learning, resulting in the marginalization of school libraries in the education sphere; and poor co-ordination between school libraries and other sectors. Karlsson, Nassimbeni & Karelse (1996: 12) observed that the administrative inefficiencies of the DET and many other factors neutralized the impact of efforts by

departments which attempted to address the deficiencies and backlogs by distributing books and other media to schools.

One of the aims of the research by the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) into library and information services (LIS) was to articulate links between LIS policy options and those for education (Walker 1993: 77). The results of this research led to the documentation of provisionally identified policy options for LIS in a future South Africa (Walker 1993: 76). One of the options suggested that library and information services should be governed within the framework of national educational policy with libraries integral to education at the formal and non-formal level (NEPI 1992). According to Stilwell (1995), the TRANSLIS Coalition, which was a collaboration often LIS groupings and was launched in 1992, grew out of co-operation achieved by the NEPI LIS Research Group. The mission of the TRANSLIS Coalition was to develop a national library and information service policy and programme. The discussion document which was produced by this coalition influenced the LIS section in the ANC Education Department's *A policy framework for education and training* which was published in 1994 (Stilwell 1995: 39). Regional branches of what is now the TRANSLIS Forum continue to work in some provinces, such as KwaZulu-Natal, towards producing policy documents which will direct the provision and governance of libraries in the provinces. Another research body, the Committee for Education Policy Document (CEPD), was hired by the ANC in 1994 to further develop LIS policy and to translate policy proposals into implementation plans or strategies. This resulted in the Implementation Plan for Education and Training (IPET) document which notes the central role that information and libraries play in all educational sectors (Stilwell 1995). In its policy proposals the ANC proposed that every education and training institution would provide its learners with access to an appropriate LIS (ANC 1995: 85).

It is true to say that the achievement so far has been the completion of the policy document which provides a national policy framework for school library standards (S.A. DoE 1997b: 3), but the nation is yet to see practical delivery. As de Villiers (1997: 80) warned earlier, the inefficiencies which plagued education still characterize the department today, coupled with an immense backlog which far outweighs available finances. The attitude of the Education Department towards school libraries has also not improved. Baker (1994: 141) indicated that cutbacks had targeted school libraries and the arts. She was later supported by Bawa (1996: 219) who reported the increasing withdrawal of full-time qualified teacher-librarians, because schools cannot afford these positions, and their being given increased teaching portfolios. Bawa (1996: 219) further concluded that the regarding of teacher-librarians as specialist teachers had resulted in no provision being made for them in the teacher/pupil ratio allocations, meaning that only those schools that have been able to raise the funding would be able to afford specialist teachers.

The remainder of this chapter presents an evaluation of the value and impact of the

classroom library as a means of providing access to reading material at the primary level of education. A case study has been made of the classroom libraries provided through the READ Educational Trust[4]. In South Africa the READ classroom library model has been suggested as an alternative to the traditional school library (Karlsson 1996: 3).

READ educational trust

Information about the READ Trust has been gleaned from various annual reports produced by READ. This non-profit-making educational trust which now has 13 regional offices around the country is funded by the South African private sector and foreign donors. It was founded in response to community concern regarding the lack of reading and library services in black townships (Menell in READ 1996: 1). Menell (in READ 1992:3) reported that READ began in 1979 with a small group of volunteers working out of limited space generously made available by St John's College. A Board of Trustees guides the macro affairs of READ and, together with elected regional committees, guides the policies of the READ Trust (READ 1991).

The mission of READ is:

'To help people throughout South Africa to develop their reading, writing, learning, information and communication skills so that they can become independent life-long learners' (READ 1996: 1).

The organization has clear objectives which aim to improve and enrich the learning experiences of all learners by promoting learner-centred teaching methods in a stimulating environment, thus providing them with various essential learning skills.

The READ programme consists of the most practical training programmes for principals, librarians, teachers, student teachers and community workers to inculcate in learners independent learning skills and improve language competencies through the use of books and other materials; it provides library resources as well as ongoing monitoring of projects to ensure that agreed objectives are met and that materials provided are used by educators and learners to improve reading and communication skills across the curriculum (Menell in READ 1996: 3).

The Training Centre in Braamfontein (Gauteng Province) provides the focal point for READ's work in schools, colleges and communities (READ 1996:7) by co-ordinating READ's materials and course development and specific training projects. It is at this training centre that READ trainers and leader-teachers attend a series of professional courses at the beginning of each year, which gives them a thorough understanding of

READ's philosophy and methodology and the confidence to monitor and train on their own.

READ is further strengthened by its in-house assessment and evaluation process which involves the teachers assessing themselves, as well as being assessed by their colleagues or principals, and by READ staff. The data is used by READ to make decisions about revision of courses, development of materials and retraining of staff (READ 1995: 5). All READ courses clearly demonstrate how assessment is linked to specific outcomes and performance criteria (READ 1997:16), which is why READ boasts of:

'the growing capacity to evaluate outcomes in the classroom with a considerable degree of accuracy and to use those evaluations both as benchmarks and as a basis for comparison with situations in which our programmes are not offered. That capacity has already demonstrated most emphatically the measurable and highly cost effective value of our programmes in the classroom' (Menell in READ 1996: 3).

An opportunity to look back and take account of the entire process was recommended by Kuhlthau (1993: 13) who declared that assessing the process as well as the product at the end of the project was an essential part of the process approach to information skills.

Read programmes

- *programmes for teachers*

READ's *leader-teacher programme* is often described as an invaluable force for sustaining the READ training programme. It began in 1990 with the intention of training a corps of teachers (selected by READ's co-ordinators in its 13 regions of operation) in core READ courses and their support materials. The leader-teachers are chosen for their leadership qualities, their dedication to their profession and their excellent teaching commitment. They are encouraged to share their skills in the use and making of teaching aids through the running of workshops with colleagues in surrounding schools (READ 1997: 10).

The *primary school programme* (PSP) is a continuum of courses designed to improve the professional skills of language and subject teachers and librarians while improving the language competence and cognitive development of the children. This programme enables them to move from traditional rote learning to a child-centred, story-based approach which promotes active learning (READ 1996: 7).

The *high school programme* involves the development of courses. It has concentrated

on the development of information skills. This has led to a module on Information Skills being included in the college syllabi (READ 1996: 8).

The *partnership for change programme* is a focused series of courses in Educational Management for Change. It consists of 14 modules in effective school governance which is offered to departmental officials, principals and the broader school community, equipping them with the necessary skills to become essential players in decision making and implementation (READ 1997: 18). Qualification criteria for the Diploma in Educational Management for Change, endorsed by Damelin, have been formulated jointly by READ, Damelin (a private college) and 20 representative principals from Gauteng schools.

Opportunities for the certification of READ programmes have begun to emerge (READ 1995: 7). For instance, teachers who have attended READ courses are offered credits by the Natal College of Education in Pietermaritzburg when they register to further their qualifications. The University of Port Elizabeth includes modules from READ courses in the diploma course offered as part of its in-service teacher training programme. The incentive of formal recognition and accreditation from the Education Department would motivate teachers to apply the underlying theories and philosophies of a resource-based approach to learning English (READ 1997:7).

- *materials development*

READ's materials development initiative designs courses and materials which are inexpensive and are aimed at encouraging teachers to write new material with their pupils (READ 1996: 12). READ's approach follows international trends in language and literacy development, especially trends in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The courses and materials provide teachers with the methodology demonstrated at training courses (READ 1993: 10) and the resources to implement the changes required by new educational policy (READ 1997: 23). READ's system which grades materials according to difficulty, does not tie them rigidly to particular school standards. An important conclusion is that 'the notion that all children in a given classroom are at the same level of development is a patent absurdity, perpetuated by teacher-centred classroom practices and by the illusion of uniformity promoted by an over-dependence on text-books' (READ 1995: 8).

The flexibility, in terms of level, that is built into READ's materials means that it is possible to distribute the same materials to pupils of differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds, providing a way of unifying and democratizing the classroom experiences of all school-going South Africans (READ 1995: 8). This is in line with Ray's recommendation (1994: 9) of a range of materials suitable for different levels of ability, e.g. puzzles, quizzes, competitions, pathfinders for the most popular subjects. As

commented in a READ's annual report: 'by contrast the argument that different sectors of the population require different learning materials could be seen to represent exactly the forms of cultural and racial segregation favoured by the architects of apartheid' (READ 1995: 8).

To collaborate this view, Radebe (1995: 120) discounted the practice of restricting children to books which supposedly depict familiar settings, on the grounds that the practice was used by the apartheid government to justify and enforce a separate and inferior education for black people, and on the premise that what is familiar to one black child is not necessarily familiar to every black child.

READ materials

READ's materials are described briefly below:

- the *Big Books* contain original, previously unpublished stories which have been carefully selected, tested and edited to meet the needs of non-mother tongue English learners in South Africa (READ 1996: 12). The illustrations, drawn in full colour by professional artists, represent a wide range of artistic styles, media and techniques;

- each *Picture Story Pack* contains a series of eight full-colour posters, six Little Books with copies of the posters in story sequence and a Teacher's Guide (READ 1996: 13). The objective is to stimulate pupils to tell or write stories based on a sequence of story posters, to develop visual literacy and to improve cognitive skills such as temporal sequencing, relating cause and effect, and predicting outcomes. The material is flexible and can be used for various levels of ability, and in any language;

- the *Afrika-Tales* are richly illustrated books, each containing one story based on indigenous oral tales from all over Africa (READ 1996: 13). The Afrika-Tales are intended for group and individual reading and aim to encourage independent reading and study skills;

- *theme packs*, which reportedly explore themes in the new curriculum, enable teachers to develop language, literacy and learning skills across the curriculum, whilst providing children with models for accessing and processing information from various forms of non-fiction texts and visual presentations, as well as teaching life skills.

Special projects

READ runs a number of special projects which all support a basic premise that reading is the key to life. Some of the projects are summarized below (READ 1997: 9):

- the *Teachers ' Training College project* provides a cost-effective way of intervening in education to assist student teachers in improving their own reading and information skills, while at the same time introducing them to a variety of appropriate teaching strategies (READ 1995: 7). READ has already made an impact in this area by, for instance, facilitating the formation, in KwaZulu-Natal, of a College Librarians' Association which has developed into a strong lobby group which has been able to tackle the Provincial Education department on matters of policy (READ 1997: 11);

- through the *Sunshine in South Africa Pilot Project,* Sunshine books are presented in colourful boxes and are graded according to reading ability in packs containing 20 Big Books and 44 Little Books. The books are all story-based and cross-curricula in content. They have been cross-referenced to the specific learning outcomes of *Curriculum 2005,* they are easily translated into other languages and lend themselves to the local development of material;

- the *Festival of Books* (FOB) which involves dramatizations of stories and choral verse, explores ways in which stories can be used to develop pupils' language skills (READ 1997: 13);

- the *READathon,* which may involve holding story reading and storytelling performances, or organizing reading sessions at the (public) library, or motivating children to read a certain number of books in a certain time, is a national literacy awareness campaign (READ 1997: 13);

- as part of the *IDT/ODA* (*now DFID*) *15 Schools Book Project,* the Independent Development Trust (IDT), through a network of 11 regional trusts, has built 12,000 classrooms all over South Africa since 1991, in rural and urban primary and secondary schools. In support, DFID (the British Government's Department for International Development) funded a two-year project to supply 15 completed schools with libraries of UK and local books as well as complementary training. The British Council which was asked to manage the project asked READ to select the material and conduct the training. The project has been completed, to be followed by its evaluation in 1998 (READ 1997: 13).

Read's role in the new education paradigm

Various national documents on teacher training, curriculum development and national qualification framework are being applied to curriculum development at provincial levels. Here READ plays an active role, since the changes government is planning to introduce in education and training have always been part of READ's philosophy (READ 1996: 12). READ already offers in-service (INSET) and pre-service (PRESET) training in active, child-centred teaching methods and outcome-based learning. Increasingly READ is working with educational authorities, subject advisers and college lecturers in this regard.

Baker (1994: 141) observed that cutbacks at formerly white schools started with libraries and the arts, implying that there is little chance of savings being channelled into new libraries. As a consequence, the only way out for schools in the townships is to rely on organizations like READ for some time to come, if they are not to remain completely deprived of books.

The IPET document (Centre for Education Policy Development 1994) recommended that READ should service all the nine provinces of South Africa by offering fully designed training programmes, including the train-the-trainer programme.

READ is negotiating with various education departments to use its programme to assist the implementation of *Curriculum 2005*.

Evaluation findings

A report, based on a survey of pupils participating in READ's programmes on reading and writing skills, drew a number of important conclusions (Le Roux and Schollar 1996: 18-22). Some of these are reported below.

- the findings point out the dire need for attention to be paid to the reading skills of black pupils;

- The READ schools are very clearly ahead of their counterparts in the control schools in terms of reading and writing - the READ schools outperformed their control school counterparts by between 189% in Std 3, 151% in Std 4 and 104% in Std 5 (Le Roux and Schollar 1996: 20). Pupils in READ schools have accelerated their language proficiency skills by up to two years. In terms of their reading scores they are ahead by 18 months whilst in terms of writing scores they are over two years ahead at the same stage;

- there are major differences (over 60% on average) between the urban schools and the rural schools in terms of pupils' reading performance which READ (1996: 18) attributes to lack of exposure of the rural farm school children to books, newspapers, magazines, television, radio and various other forms of communicative media in English;

- the selection of reading materials is a vital and critical element in the process. South African children, especially those in the deep rural areas, have special needs and requirements. There needs to be a definite focus on those needs when it comes to the selection and writing of materials suitable for South African conditions;

- the role of the teacher in a book-based approach cannot be overestimated. The most successful schools visited were those with enthusiastic, motivated and committed teachers who had received good in-service training and back-up;

- READ schools participate voluntarily, without any 'formal' recognition or incentives. [The conclusion was that] with the incentive of formal recognition and accreditation from the relevant educational authorities, teachers would be even more motivated to apply the underlying theories and philosophies of a book-based approach to learning English;

READ's classroom libraries

The information on classroom libraries, provided to primary schools, has also been gleaned from READ annual reports and a paper which was presented by Mrs Cynthia Hugo, the National Director, at a conference[5] in which she described this model.

What is a classroom library?

READ's initial classroom library provision is a selection of about 60 books, consisting of exciting and colourful fiction books appropriate to the child's reading and interest level, non-fiction books closely related to topics on the curriculum (to help the teacher in lesson preparation) and a few reference books such as dictionaries and an atlas (Hugo 1996: 89). These resources are placed in a strong, lockable, portable wooden box which functions both as a storage container and a display cabinet. However any kind of display unit or a library comer could be equally functional. Innovative story-board and poster materials have also been designed to be used together with the classroom collections. In addition, READ has arranged sponsorship for these collections, developed and run training programmes (to show the teacher how to use books to make

lesson content more interesting) for schools in which their boxes are placed (Hugo 1996: 89). Usually the collection is on loan to the teacher from a more central depot/collection which is normally off school premises and materials have to be returned and replenished each term or each month, in order to meet the new curriculum needs of the learners and the teacher (S.A. DoE 1997b: 35). The materials are required to be kept in the classroom and managed by the teacher so as to be as accessible as possible for easy use in the present situation, in which often neither the teacher nor the learner are accustomed to using resources (Hugo 1996: 87). The box is placed where learners, particularly primary school learners, can browse through the books in between other class activities and use them freely. READ has successfully piloted this model in many schools across South Africa. A READ classroom library, as estimated during the NEPI policy exercise, cost R1.335.50 (US$313.50) in 1995, excluding training and delivery costs, with about 15 boxes being required per primary school (Bawa 1996: 239). Thus the cost per school, excluding training and delivery costs, would be in the region of R20.032.50 (US$4,702.50).

The purposes or objectives of READ's classroom libraries are:

- to provide learning resources for teachers coupled with training programmes to show the teacher how to use books to make content lesson teaching more interesting;

- to provide resources for learners to use;

- to enable teachers to move away from the 'tyranny' of textbooks and demonstrate to learners that facts can come from more than one source;

- to enable teachers to demonstrate to learners how knowledge is selected, presented and interpreted in different sources thus leading learners to develop critical thinking and appraisal skills;

- to prepare learners for visits to a central school library or community library through being introduced to book organization and classification, which are essential skills to their future independent study and research skills; classroom libraries should in no way replace the school library but should be seen as a first step towards it;

- to ensure that a reading culture flourishes;

- to add colour and a centre of interest to the classroom (Hugo 1996: 89).

The stakeholders of classroom libraries are the same as READ stakeholders. They are: the READ Trust, the private companies who fund these libraries, elected regional committees which represent the communities, the Board of Trustees, the Development Board, the National Executive, the National Committee, as well as the benefactors, that is, the Department of Education, the schools, principals and teachers who run these libraries.

How classroom libraries are used

Children are first encouraged to use the classroom library by choosing their books for the silent reading lesson. Later they are encouraged to read books in free periods when the teacher is called out of the classroom, when some learners finish a task more quickly than others and after school hours. When learners have learned proper care of books, they are encouraged to take books home and share them with other members of the family. The books, which are selected are at the right level of reading, are aimed at encouraging the teacher and learners to make time for reading, as well as adding colour and a centre of interest to the classroom. Learners must be free to choose the books they read and must be allowed to handle them freely. When they reach the stage at which they need to read for information, the classroom library provides teachers with a gentle way of introducing learners to finding and using books on a particular topic.

Why the classroom library?

It is important to understand the reasoning behind the launching of classroom libraries by READ.

READ noted the bleakness of many classrooms and how the teachers' ability to teach creatively was severely hampered by a lack of resources as well as a need for more professional training (READ 1994: 3). Correspondingly, Hugo (in READ 1994: 10) noted that bleak, under-resourced classrooms could not become 'sites for learning' and that reliance on the textbook alone would continue the practice of rote-learning and teaching. The poor classroom, according to READ (1994), is characterized by a lack of books, teaching aids, visual stimulus; rote learning; a teacher who often lacks confidence; pupils who need greater stimulation; and an atmosphere of rigid discipline; - all characteristic of black schools.

It thus became READ's aim to transform as many classrooms as they could into the 'READ classroom' where teacher and pupils have the best possible opportunity to make education a positive experience (READ 1994: 3). The classroom transformation begins with this 'box library'. To develop the skills of independent reading, team work, peer learning and leadership, READ (1994: 4) have changed the arrangement of desks from rigid rows facing the teacher to group arrangements, a situation which they believe

makes teaching large classes more manageable.

Hugo (in READ 1994: 10) maintained that, on the whole, the classrooms of teachers trained by READ provide a more stimulating environment. This fulfils a requirement proposed by Ray (1994: 8), that is, an improvement of the library image through changes to the physical appearance, the general atmosphere and environment.

Arguments in support of the classroom library model

Hugo (1996: 89) made the observation that most South African children come from homes where very little reading takes place, where there are no books and a reading culture is not understood. A weak book culture and lack of reading in the home has a negative effect on the whole of a child's learning. She thus advised that the most efficient way to compensate for this is to provide children with an intimate and pleasurable knowledge of books. This can be facilitated by providing classroom libraries in all classes and by training every primary school teacher to introduce his/her pupils to books as an integral part of their learning and leisure experience (Hugo 1996: 90). This was supported by Gibbs (1985: 310) when she argued that it is important for pupils to be surrounded by books, particularly if this is unlikely at home. Schonell (1961: 195) confirmed this by claiming that:

'the class library has the great advantage that it is on hand every hour of the school day... teachers can make use of it during lessons by taking books to illustrate particular points, and can lead children to make use of books for many lessons during the school week. Queries raised and problems posed may be dealt with by teacher and pupil acting together at the exact time the need arises... is certainly the most effective means of training children in the use of books' (Schonell: 1961: 201).

Adams and Pearce argued that the class library can be used by the teacher

'to (saturate) pupils with books: books to read, to look at, to get information from; childish books to revert to... books which should be on desks, tables and display racks, not in cupboards or hidden among neatly arranged ranks of undisturbed library books' (Adams and Pearce: 1974: 69).

Hugo (1996: 89) asserted that the very presence of book resources within the classroom means that books and book-related learning are integrated into the learner's classroom experience from the first grade. Bane and Mwamwenda (1994: 129) had advised that every effort should be made to provide classrooms with an adequate number and type of culturally appropriate instructional materials. This was supported by Hugo (1996: 87) in her assertion that the quality of education in a classroom is, to a large extent, dependent on an adequate supply of appropriate resources to make learner-centred

teaching and independent learning possible. She declared that without resources, reliance on the textbook is usually the norm and rote learning is more likely to continue to be common practice.

The greatest strength and advantage of this model is perhaps the close and constant proximity that learners have throughout the school day to a set of appropriate learning resources (S.A. DoE 1997b: 36). Further, although the school is not able to build up and invest in its own library collection, educators and learners benefit by having access to a collection which is constantly replenished with the very latest publications and productions, selected by professional staff. Another great advantage raised (S.A. DoE 1997b: 36) is that implementation of this library model does not require the school to have a post for a professional teacher-librarian. Instead, one teacher needs to perform a co-ordinating role and each teacher should attend in-service training on how to use the classroom library effectively in lessons. This is most important at a time in South Africa when posts for teacher-librarians are being taken away and given to teachers or when teacher-librarians are being given full or heavy teaching loads (Bawa 1996).

In support of classroom libraries, Gibbs (1985: 310) argued that most primary schools do have classroom collections (although this is unfortunately not the case in South African schools) and many teachers would be extremely loathe to centralize these materials. This is because one can never guarantee that the materials will be available when they are needed. (She then refuted this argument stating that if there is a whole-school policy (i.e. a centralized school library) everyone should know well in advance what everyone else is doing.) Gibbs (1985: 310) further claimed that in classroom libraries resources are always, and immediately, accessible to pupils; the teacher can control the resources - important for younger primary children who may be overwhelmed by a central collection if they have yet to learn the skills of location and selection.

Arguments against classroom libraries

The arguments forwarded by Gibbs (1985: 310) against classroom libraries, and in support of the central library are that:

- it makes for economic use of resources;

- it provides a wider range of materials for pupils to select from and therefore, in theory, improves their skills in selecting relevant information;

- it teaches pupils to use a large collection (as compared to a classroom library), which is important if they are to use secondary school and other

libraries competently later on;

- it provides a quiet study area - this is one of the library's functions although it should not be its main one.

Francis (1989: 13) is against classroom collections on the bases that they present a strong potential for duplication. She claimed that as children move up a year they might be pleased to find old favourites, but disappointed to see familiar titles they have read already, or passed over as not to their taste. She claimed that people who make these selections are not always at the chalk face and thus do not always know what children are actually reading. The discussion document (S.A. DoE 1997b: 35) based occasional negative perceptions of this model on the fact that because the classroom library was only offered in African schools, it was, therefore, perceived to be a cheap compromise in providing African learners with some half-hearted form of library provision.

Methodology

Choice of methodology and rationale

The method used to collect data for this study was the focus group discussion. A sample of 29 primary school teachers and three leader-teachers were surveyed on their experiences in running READ's classroom libraries and in using them to offer resource-based programmes using the materials in the libraries. Some information was also received from two READ library advisers.

Focus group interviewing has been identified as the best and a cheap and quick method of research for collecting qualitative data (Kamfer 1989: 7; Day 1991: 389; Widdows, Hensler and Wyncott 1991: 352; Oberg and Easton 1995: 119). The timing of the study coincided with school examinations, a time that is not suitable for involving teachers in additional activities. Not more than two hours of their time on one day was required for the study and this resulted in a very good response rate.

The strength of the focus group lies in providing an opportunity for probing and clarification. This characteristic proved an asset to this study whose objective was to assess a tribute as elusive as 'effectiveness'. The mailed questionnaire method would have been expensive and unreliable since the South African postal system is currently known for its problems. Also this method has many possible potential problems such as the 'no return' phenomenon which the researcher experienced in a previous study (Radebe 1997) and which is well reported in the literature too. Furthermore, many people tend to complete questionnaires as a matter of duty and simply tick and move on, skipping questions which require in-depth responses.

The phenomenon of participants building on one another's comments (snowballing), as described by Kamfer (1989: 8) and Oberg and Easton (1995: 119) was another attraction of focus group discussion to the researcher.

Sample

Although the READ classroom libraries function around the whole of South Africa, the study focused only on three districts within the Pietermaritzburg Region of KwaZulu-Natal Province. This was due to costs as well as time constraints. The three districts surveyed in the study are the Midlands, Pietermaritzburg and Umvoti Districts, as designated by the Provincial Education Department.

Originally only Grade 5 teachers were to be involved in the study. However, after the pilot study, it became apparent that restricting the study to this group of teachers would not be profitable since developmental stage changes in pupils do not follow a pattern which allows surveying one level only. These potentially impacted on the way teachers would be able to comment on and discuss issues, thus enabling the researcher to establish trends in their responses. Therefore, the population of the study was primary school teachers who were running classroom libraries and who had been trained, irrespective of the level of grade they taught. The three leader-teachers (one from each district) were also surveyed, separately from the teachers, on their experiences. This was because, whilst they are leader-teachers, they are also running their own classroom libraries. The three library advisers (one from each of the three districts) also provided information through letters on their experiences, especially relating to the training of teachers and principals and on their experiences at the schools. Their observations were useful.

After securing permission from the READ National Director, Mrs Cynthia Hugo, to evaluate the READ classroom library, the composite list of schools working with READ in the Pietermaritzburg Region was supplied by the READ office in Durban. With the help of library advisers, the researcher separated the schools into the three regions as run by READ. The sampling was done with the help of the three READ library advisers who advised the researcher about which schools were functioning and which were not functioning in terms of READ library programmes, (the aim being to get a mix of the two), and which would be accessible in terms of distance and the possibility of roads. This process produced a sampling frame of 79 schools from which 40 were selected. Only one teacher from each school could be invited to keep numbers in line with the guidelines for a focus group discussion, which limit numbers to between 7-8 (minimum) and 10-12 (maximum) people per group (Kamfer 1989: 7; Day 1991: 389; Widdows, Hensler and Wyncott 1991: 352; Oberg and Easton 1995: 119). The researcher wrote letters to the teachers requesting their participation. In all three regions the leader-teachers distributed letters on behalf of the researcher and helped in

organizing the meetings. In total, 29 teachers from all three regions participated in the group discussions, giving a 73% response. The 29 teachers who participated (7, 9, and 13 from each of the 3 districts) were all from schools which were functioning. Those from the schools where the classroom libraries were not put to maximum use did not come to the discussions.

Data collection and analysis

A semi-structured interview framework was designed by the researcher. This framework was used in the pilot study and adapted accordingly thereafter. The instrument (framework) was divided, informally, into sections which addressed different but related aspects of the issues under discussion. The indicators addressed, reflected in the questions asked, included some which are reflected in the objectives of classroom libraries as given by READ and listed earlier. These objectives identify skills which are supposed to be inculcated in learners through the use of classroom libraries. In those cases objective-related research questions were generated, in line with an assertion by Tameem (1992: 16).

The first section of the instrument was thus aimed at addressing the issue of provision and availability which led to the indicators of availability, accessibility, and sufficiency. The second section addressed relevance including materials selection, the curriculum, sufficiency of numbers of books and type of materials. The third section of the instrument addressed the issue of staff training, including follow-up sessions. The fourth section addressed impact, which covered independence in accessing of library, independence in selecting materials, inculcation of analytical and critical thinking skills (deciphering and challenging of differing viewpoints, formulating their own arguments and drawing conclusions) and reading skills. This limited the number of questions to 21. Although this exceeded the suggested 14 to 15 pre-determined questions arranged in a logical order (Oberg and Easton 1995: 119), 21 questions were manageable.

To make the participants relax and to provide a familiar and non-intimidating environment as suggested by Kamfer (1989: 8) and Day (1993: 389), the researcher involved the participants in deciding how the room should be arranged. Tea was offered whilst the researcher welcomed the participants and thanked them for their time. After introductions the purpose and objectives of the study were explained and placed in the context of the broader South African education. This procedure was followed with all groups as suggested by Kamfer (1989: 9). Permission to record the discussion was requested whilst personal confidentiality was guaranteed as advised by both Kamfer (1989: 9) and Tameem (1992: 16).

Group discussions lasted for an hour and a half to an hour and three quarters each, which corresponds with Day's suggestion (1993: 390) that a focus group discussion

lasts one to one and a half hours only.

The intention was to collect both qualitative and quantitative data but since there was always an overwhelming agreement on issues, quantity was not an issue (no need for frequency counts). The researcher regarded differing on an issue from the groups by one or two people as 'rare event' data and did not report on it unless the comment was of particular importance, as advised by Widdows, Hensler and Wyncott (1991: 355). The group's responses were summarized to determine the extent of agreement.

Participants were encouraged to build on one another's insights, a process viewed by Oberg and Easton (1995: 119) as offering participants security, encouragement, excitement and stimulation to participate in a group discussion and to make further comments on discussions initiated by their colleagues.

The researcher's status as external evaluator who was not involved personally with READ enabled the participants to relax and 'pour their hearts out' about their experiences with the libraries. The fact that they did not know the researcher's attitude to the organization is likely to have dissuaded them from either aiming to appease or to displease the facilitator with false responses. A measure of genuineness/authenticity was ensured by this factor.

The first step after all discussions was transmission of data of each section from audio-tapes and written notes. The researcher did a contents analysis after organizing comments by topic and editing them in sequential order until broad themes emerged, a procedure which was suggested by Kamfer (1989: 8) and Widdows, Hensler and Wyncott (1991: 355).

Problems

A major weakness of focus groups, to which the researcher cannot attest from this study, is that data obtained cannot be easily generalized to the larger population (Widdows, Hensler and Wyncott (1991: 352).

The first limitation in the present study was that only the 'good' teachers turned up for the discussions, although that in itself confirmed a problem which was raised by all participants, leader-teachers and library advisers, that is lack of commitment by many teachers.

The aim of the study was to evaluate classroom libraries for effectiveness and cost effectiveness. A few comments on these indicators are necessary to put another major limitation in perspective. *Effectiveness* of classroom libraries is not a straight forward phenomenon and it was difficult to measure in this study. This corresponds with major

conclusions which Van House and Childers (1993: 1) drew from some research, firstly that effectiveness (which they view as an enigma) is a multi-dimensional construct, meaning that no single measure of effectiveness is sufficient to describe an organization. Secondly, no single definition of organizational effectiveness will suffice. In this study, trying to establish in practical reality, the best approach and the best indicators for measuring effectiveness of classroom libraries, was no easy matter!

Measuring cost effectiveness was another difficulty. To address this indicator, the researcher has commented on her observations and reported on comments relating to cost effectiveness, made in the literature as well as by READ staff.

Findings

In this section teachers who participated in the discussions are referred to as participants[6], whereas leader-teachers and library advisers are referred to as such.

Availability of materials

Size and sufficiency

All participants agreed that at the time of the survey their libraries contained more than the 60 items first supplied; in some instances they were double the original size. This was due to the fact that, although they were allowed to exchange libraries with READ, these libraries were in fact never returned to the organization. There was a measure of flexibility on the issue which enabled READ to deal with schools on an individual basis. Instead the classroom library had been increased through additions, with exchanges only between classes within the same schools. The average class size was ± 35 (up to 40); in eight cases two classes shared a room, resulting in a class size of 70.

The general feeling was that the original 60 items had been sufficient for the number of pupils. When two participants from one district expressed a need for duplication of non-fiction titles, other participants reminded them that the non-fiction in the classroom libraries was not meant to replace textbooks. (A number of people have argued against the use of any library as a storeroom for textbooks.)

Size of a collection cannot alone determine its quality, as it says nothing about the content or condition of the items (Doll 1997: 95). The age of the collection is suggested as one possible measure of quality, that is, how the materials in the library keep up to date with curriculum changes. Since READ materials are curriculum-based, are produced by READ themselves in response to identified needs and their programmes are reportedly ahead of *Curriculum 2005*, good quality is assured. Facilities to replenish

or enlarge the library are easily available - it is a matter of a telephone call to the adviser and if available the materials are delivered. Participants reported that the decision to enlarge or exchange is an internal school's arrangement. Once a pack has been exhausted they are permitted to exchange for different ones if necessary.

Although the participants and leader-teachers were generally happy with the materials, even so they expressed a need for more and different books around the middle of the year. They all agreed that the need for more was not a reflection of insufficiency on the part of the READ library but rather a reflection of 'greed for more' on their part and that of the pupils, which had been aroused in them by READ. One of the participants stated that, 'as with anything one enjoys in life, one starts noticing and hunting for more books'. They claimed that READ has trained them to be active, instilled an inquisitiveness in them which makes them always look for more, which they are also fostering in their pupils.

Need to access other collections

To satisfy this 'greed' and generally to support the curriculum, participants expressed the need to access other libraries in town. The other libraries they access for all types of materials, including fiction, non-fiction and reference, are the Natal Society Public Library, the Teachers' Education Library and the Tembaletu Community Resources Centre. The necessity for teachers to access information sources from beyond the school is well supported in the literature.

Kuhlthau identifies access to outside sources through technology as one of the elements of success in the implementation of the process approach to information skills (1993: 16). One would argue that a resource-based education is one process approach to information skills. In providing a variety of materials to create an environment of critical examination of information, Callison suggested that emphasis may need to be placed on acquiring special index resources that in turn lead to a greater use of interlibrary loan. At the same time greater contact with resources, beyond the school, through the community networks maintained by the school library media specialist must be advocated (Callison 1994:49). A consultant for READ suggested that local libraries should be requested to make available copies of the recommended books as a further source of information for students (Brindley 1991: 60). And such networks are nurtured by READ teachers.

All participants agreed that the classroom library was not sufficient for teaching all library skills to both pupils and teachers. Some claimed that what was lacking was only experience of a big library as well as exposure to the 'technical' side of library procedures. To solve this problem, six participants who teach in Pietermaritzburg have entered into a formal arrangement with the Natal Society Public Library. According to

them this has been due to the fact that READ has trained them to be enterprising and to network. Through this arrangement the teachers occasionally take pupils to the library to do block borrowings and take the materials back to their schools to enrich their classroom libraries. At the public library the pupils are put through the mundane library procedure of registering, getting cards, selecting materials and taking them out, for instance. Through this process pupils learn these library practices. By this time they are already acquainted with the organization and classification of the materials in their classroom libraries and thus understand the sequence and the purpose of the bigger library.

One group suggested the institution of exchanges amongst schools as a way of accessing other collections. This is because their relationships with READ started at different times and therefore makes some of them 'old' and others 'new' in terms of their association with READ. The general feeling was that both groups, the 'old' and the 'new', would benefit from exchanges amongst schools. The 'old' schools would send their old books to the 'new' schools which would then get to enjoy those books which might be regarded as 'classics'. The 'old' schools would get access to new books as they often get envious of the 'new' schools when they receive new and more attractive materials.

All participants expressed a need for replenishing on a yearly basis which would require support of the education department to address the problem of funding.

Accessibility of materials

Opening hours

Apart from one school, which only allowed pupils to access the classroom library once a week, the rest said there were no restrictions - it all depended on the situation in each class. They all concluded that the number of times the library can be accessed at one sitting is an internal class arrangement. Generally, once pupils had completed projects they were free to access the classroom library. The only restrictions are those instituted in order to maintain some order especially where schools were running combined classes (Grades 1 and 2) in one room, at the same time.

Some participants in one district reported how in their schools they had collapsed a number of classroom libraries into one central library, but also continued to run their classroom libraries. Each class spends a formal library period in the central library once a week, with free access to the classroom libraries. On Fridays everyone is free to visit the central library. Outside of class activities they are free to access libraries before school assembly, during breaks and after school to encourage them to regard a visit to the library as a leisure activity like any play activity. Teachers had concluded that free

access was rewarding to the child and so some had trained the pupils to 'grab a book when idle' and that 'the best friend you can ever have is a book'. Some had made bookmarks out of those slogans. This corresponds with Baker's report (1994: 136) about a teacher at Walter Teka School in Greater Cape Town (a READ school), who has also created a central library putting all the books from the standard 5 (i.e. Grade 7) boxes into her classroom, making it both a English subject specialist room and a place where children can read whenever they have a chance. There was no formal system for borrowing books, but children could take books home by arrangement with the teacher.

The general observation from the participants was that the teacher's role and attitude to the library was crucial in maximizing access.

Loans

One school reported that it did not allow pupils to take books home for fear of them getting destroyed. (This was the same school which allowed access only once a week.) But all the other participants agreed that, initially, pupils were allowed one item at a time but then it depended on the individual pupil's reading speed and performance.

All participants and leader-teachers reported that Friday is a special day on which pupils are allowed to take out as many books as possible depending on availability. This is when fast readers tend to be restricted by having to wait for books to be returned. It had become normal practice for teachers in such situations to borrow from other classes, especially from those whose books 'lie covered in dust', when they ran out of materials for fast readers. This is done in an attempt to avoid holding back those pupils. In one school they also borrow from higher classes for higher functioning pupils, as well as encourage pupils to use the local community library or the public library in town.

Baker (1994: 136) made similar observations during her study, that is, there are schools in Cape Town who work with READ where books remain inside their boxes, hardly touched. One of the reasons for this is teachers' anxiety about children losing or spoiling the books in which case some teachers opt to keep books safe rather than use them. She also reported on keen readers in the class who go through the books that interest them quickly.

All the participants who allow pupils to take books home reported that they have stopped allowing this for pupils in Grades 1 and 2. From their experiences they concluded that from Grade 3 pupils knew how to be responsible for the books at home and understood why they had to return them, even if the parents were not involved. This must be seen in the light of majority of parents in the rural areas being illiterate and not bothering to take care of books. This appears to further confirm teachers'

anxiety, referred to by Baker, about books getting lost or spoilt.

All the participants reported that they had been trained to devise their own ways of controlling the stock. Schools which had previously belonged to the DET had been supplied with control cards when the department attempted to address provision of libraries. They thus used cards until they ran out and then started devising their own system. The majority of schools had simply prepared special books in which pupils record their own issues and returns reflecting name, title of book and date. Class library monitors are also trained to monitor the situation.

From their observations, the participants concluded that the learners were satisfied with the amount of time they were allowed with the books. A lot of flexibility was reported in a number of situations, which allowed teachers to respond to individual needs in terms of time. This is important since learners, who respond as individuals, are free to exchange books as they need to. According to participants and leader-teachers, learners do plead for extensions of time with the books. As indicated earlier, the more the pupils get acquainted with reading the more they become greedy - they can never have enough!

Training of teachers

The national training workshop for leader-teachers is run every year by READ trainers at READ headquarters in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. The training of teachers is done by the leader-teachers locally under the supervision of, and with, the library advisers. Library advisers and leader-teachers work as a team.

Leader-teachers reported that there are as many sessions as are needed for teachers and as it is possible to provide. All leader-teachers, supported by participants, reported a flexibility in organizing in service-training sessions - sometimes it is a matter of a telephone call to the adviser or a meeting in town occasionally to solve a problem.

Support of principals, etc.

Support from the top for READ's training workshops was reported as crucial. All participants, backed by library advisers, agreed that the biggest problem was lack of support from principals. Where principals are supportive things tend to go more smoothly than where the opposite prevails. In the latter situation, the 'absent' teacher's class might have to stay away from school if their teacher is attending a workshop. In some instances some principals insist on teachers taking a day's leave to attend a workshop or some training. In some farm schools, problems are posed by farm managers who do not understand the occasional absence of teachers from school to attend workshops for the benefit of the pupils. Teachers are often forced to fund their

own travelling costs to get to workshops (a problem when they live far from town), because many principals believe that it is to their own gain.

One library adviser reported that the group of teachers most reluctant to allow learners the freedom to use books effectively are the men teaching higher primary classes, who are often principals; they have come to regard them as their greatest challenge. Their lack of interest was confirmed by the minimum representation of males in the focus groups in the study.

Kuhlthau identified the issue of the principal showing considerable interest in the project as another underlying principle for success in implementing a process approach to information skills. She claimed that, in her study, the assistant principal of the school responsible for scheduling gave the project credence by conducting required formal observations of teachers and library media specialist as they worked with students, and showing the students the importance of the project by talking to them about their work as he believed his role was to 'show a little bit of interest'. The administrators provided the climate for teaming, the time for planning, and promoted, recognized and rewarded those involved in the process approach (Kuhlthau 1993: 16). This was in line with Gibbs' assertion (1985: 310) that in any school it is crucial to have the support of the head teacher if the library is to be seen as important.

At the same time, the participants and leader-teachers admitted that, although some principals are certainly responsible for this calamity, in some instances they are used as scapegoats and the teachers are in fact the culprits. Leader-teachers reported frustration at teachers' passivity, which the participants equated with a negative attitude held by some of their colleagues.

Interpersonal relations

Good interpersonal relations were appreciated by all participants, leader-teachers and library advisers. READ library advisers were commended by all participants and leader-teachers for their acknowledgement of teachers' innovations and suggestions and for treating them with respect and dignity. It is evident that co-operating with READ was always rewarding, according to all participants and leader-teachers. This co-operation was stressed by a library adviser as very important - agreeing that teachers co-operate well by attending workshops and training. The fact that travelling costs are borne by individual teachers confirms their commitment and co-operation and indicates trust between READ and teachers that their goal is common, that is, excellence for pupils. One library adviser emphasized the importance of good personal relationships with teachers commending Eskom for providing funding which has allowed her to work in the area long enough to build up good personal relations and to gain the trust of the principals and staff.

The necessity for genuine mutual respect and appreciation, as contributing members of the instructional team, for the successful implementation of a process approach to information skills, has been stressed by various writers. Success factors in teaching information skills are said to be: a strong team approach to instruction with administrators playing an integral role; and members of the instructional team exhibiting respect for one another (Kuhlthau 1993: 16; Tastad and Collins 1997: 167).

Training problems

All participants agreed that there were no problems with training from the side of READ. Two participants from one district reported sometimes experiencing problems with implementation of what had been learnt. They added that sometimes they were given too many goals and less specific objectives to be achieved. Co incidentally the leader-teacher of the two complainants reported that the number of objectives was sufficient but problems arose out of teachers' inconsistency in attending follow-up workshops and sessions where many objectives are clarified. He was supported in this view by the other leader-teachers. This was also stressed by one library adviser who mentioned that problems related to implementation emanated from the teachers' missing of follow-up visits and meetings at which things are further explained and clarified. One library adviser remarked that keen teachers arrive early whilst those who come late usually end up not grasping what was imparted and then experiencing problems with implementation.

The idea of follow-up workshops was supported by Markless (1986: 22) when he urged for effective professional development which could be through giving clear frameworks, practical examples of alternative classroom approaches and follow-through which involves help given after initial training, through informal channels and through the creation of specific opportunities for discussion, evaluation and the sharing of problems. With professional development in place, reflective professionals who formed the instructional team could, as those in Kuhlthau's study (1993: 17) use their competence and expertise to design, assess, and redesign the process program; as in Kuhlthau's study, they might also be willing to let go of old ways of doing things, and take the risk of trying something new, and be willing to accept the extra work involved.

In relation to the foregoing point, leader-teachers and participants complained that many teachers resist new teaching methods and are set in teacher-centred teaching and in perpetuating rote learning. Library advisers reported that, whilst individual teachers have been converted to the success of getting their pupils 'hooked' on reading and use of books and drama as an important part of classroom activity, other teachers in the same school might have reservations about departing from traditional, more prescriptive methods of teaching and use classroom libraries with reluctance and occasionally hardly at all. This, according to leader-teachers, results in precious materials remaining

covered in dust from lack of use.

This corresponds with Tastad and Collins's conclusion (1997: 169) from their study in which they tried to get teachers to use the writing centre, that it was more difficult to serve the middle-school curriculum teachers because the middle-school curriculum was not process oriented. Assignments were teacher-directed and the middle school teachers did not understand the role of the writing centre. Growing resistance by the teachers was reported. These researchers believe that their efforts failed because the middle-school teachers did not embrace a process approach to teaching and learning.

In the context of classroom libraries, it might pay dividends to follow Kuhlthau's advice (1993: 16) and appoint a co-ordinator to articulate the goals and set the philosophical framework for the use of classroom libraries in resource-based teaching, explaining to the team how the approach fits into the curriculum and is tied to the school goals and objectives.

Classroom libraries and the education system

All participants concurred that, at every workshop, the objectives of classroom libraries are identified, explained and used as guidelines. They are also linked to the skills libraries are aimed at inculcating. At the end of every session, there is evaluation to establish whether or not they have been achieved. They all agreed that evaluation is a very strong element in the successful running of classroom libraries.

Both the participants and leader-teachers agreed with library advisers that there is no conflict between the objectives of classroom libraries and those of the Department of Education. In the old dispensation, participants and leader-teachers reported that they had experienced a conflict when the education department emphasized written work and completion of the syllabus, whereas READ emphasized reading and speaking. READ's philosophy corresponds well with outcomes-based education (OBE). It's flexible approach to the changes in education had allowed it to fully support the new OBE and *Curriculum 2005.* Participants and leader-teachers concluded that READ's classroom library objectives have always been clear, enriching (aimed at giving the child independence in a lot of skills) and are therefore complementary to those of the Education Department, although the programme was not called OBE.

Full support from the national Department of Education was reported by all participants and leader-teachers. One library adviser explained that the support given to READ's work in training and workshops seems to depend largely on the attitude of the Circuit Inspector or the superintendent, further reporting that the attitude of these officials had been entirely positive, with encouragement and invitations to extend READ's work into more schools, which financial constraints have made difficult.

User satisfaction

Selection of materials

All participants reported that materials' selection is done by the READ library advisers, a process in which teachers are not involved. A few participants from two districts felt that they should be involved, as they are the ones working with the libraries and who understand the pupils. The majority disagreed, reminding the complainants that they could not really expect to be brought into the process because READ was only helping out, and READ's selectors were trained to do this specialized job. They felt that such demands should rather be made on their Department of Education. They also asserted that their non-involvement in materials selection was not a problem since it was easy for them to send materials back if they were not satisfied with their relevance. Leader-teachers explained that READ does involve them by seeking their advice on the issue. This system works as they have been trained to appreciate the role and importance of book selection and have been taught how it is done.

Relevance - non-fiction

All participants agreed that the non-fiction materials, which they viewed as a valuable asset in their libraries, support the curriculum. All subjects (including science which the teachers are very excited about!) are represented sometimes all in one book because of 'theme teaching' across the curriculum. In some instances they do not need to use set textbooks because the non-fiction in the class libraries is very good and relevant, that being ensured by the fact that READ develops its own non-fiction (and even fiction) which supports various subjects. The materials are more interesting to use by both teachers and pupils than the set textbooks because they are colourful and up to date and appropriate to levels.

Participants indicated that the number of copies provided poses a problem where a book serves the purpose of a textbook. To address that problem, many teachers have established relations with previously advantaged schools in the city who have made their duplicating facilities available to them. Again, recognition should go to READ for equipping them with networking and enterprising skills.

Relevance - fiction

READ's selection policy has been in many ways a policy of redress, in terms of both supplying books to the deprived, and in terms of trying to choose books that are relevant to the lives of black children. Selectors tried to move away from the Eurocentric books often found in South African schools generally. They sought out books with black characters and local settings (Baker 1994: 136).

Many participants from all 3 groups reported that they themselves had decreased the number of books depicting the rural African context because from their observations pupils displayed no more, or particular, interest in them than in those with European and American contexts. Therefore, giving books with rural African contexts more focus was not necessary even for rural children. Their argument was that rural children would not necessarily live out their lives as rural adults. They further argued that rural children would attend tertiary institutions with urban children and would not enjoy being treated at that level as a special species that has not been exposed, through books, to a variety of situations.

Participants also emphasized that for South African children, it is important to include white people, Indians, towns, town houses, mud houses, the beach, etc., because they all form part of the South African environment. Participants and leader-teachers claimed that sometimes books about white people are approved of and enjoyed by the pupils more than those which supposedly represent black people.

The participants and leader-teachers felt strongly about the issue of westernization. The general feeling amongst them was that black people, like all other races, cannot run away from westernization. Neither can they reject westernization because that is the way they live and have lived since they were born, without necessarily avoiding their traditions. One stated that, 'a so-called western way of life is the only way many of us know and that does not mean that we are rejecting African traditions. We are surviving in the world not only in South Africa'.

Other writers have written about the danger of restricting the background of fiction to what is known. Rural children have dreams and aspirations which are varied and they need to have their imagination nurtured through exposure to a variety of settings. The importance for them being given the opportunity to escape their surroundings even if only in fantasy, like any other child, cannot be over-emphasized (Radebe 1996a: 192-193; Leeb 1990: 30) The attitude today is to help them nurture their 'global' dreams. It was 'normal' in the past to feed rural children a rural education to perpetuate the availability of labour on farms, a practice which is being discouraged in the present atmosphere of transformation.

On the issue of context and familiarity of settings, the socio-cultural background in books has very little to do with their popularity with children (Radebe 1995: 124; Robinson and Weintraub 1973; Tucker 1981; Diakiw 1990; Bennett 1991). Hurst (1993) used African and European traditional folk tales in her study to test (with racially-mixed classes of children around Durban in South Africa) the idea that children respond best (or only) to stories set within their cultural milieu. She concluded from the children's responses that the cultural origin of the story had no relative effect on enjoyment of the story.

Baker (1994) relates a similar scenario. Children from the afore-mentioned Walter Teka School were taken to a book shop and asked to select books for their classmates and to talk about their personal reading preferences. What they enjoyed most were adventure stories. Although they did not reject local books, they were adamant that the setting of a book was not important, the story was. They also claimed that the colour of the characters was irrelevant. Related to this point is the one raised by Brindley, a consultant for READ, who concluded from one of his research projects into black students' reading preferences, that whether the book is written by a black writer is less important than whether the story is enjoyable, relevant and easy to understand (Brindley 1991: 59). Baker warned that in attempting to find relevant local books, selectors may be offering a narrower range than children want, claiming that texts are multi-voiced, and can appeal to different children on different levels.

Perhaps as a result of and in response to all this research on pupils' reading needs and preferences, READ appears to be moving away from their earlier selection policy of favouring books with black characters and local settings and moving to the provision of books with mixed settings.

Of all the fiction in the classroom libraries, picture books are the most popular materials especially for younger pupils because of their attractive colours and illustrations.

Pupils' satisfaction

Participants agreed that pupils were satisfied with the materials, a factor which became evident from their involvement with the materials. Both fiction and non-fiction were thoroughly enjoyed by pupils, especially the fiction and other genres such as drama, choral verse and rhymes, which the participants and leader-teachers claim are valuable for teaching language skills. The reported involvement resulted in improvement in their reading, learning and writing skills, in presentation, vocabulary, expression and in the confidence and the sense of achievement and pride pupils display when they do well.

Support in running classroom libraries

Regarding this issue, participants concurred that READ's help and support is 'just a telephone call away'. Support is also available from colleagues - more recognition to READ for nurturing the team spirit.

Markless (1986: 21) stressed the need for support which becomes even more pressing as there is no universal solution to the problem of developing successful learners and no generally applicable blueprint for the implementation of information skills in all classrooms and libraries and across all subjects. She stressed that it is not possible to

recommend one course or a set of practices that will solve students' learning problems. She therefore proposed collaboration to set up a variety of experiences across the curriculum which will help students learn how to learn. READ offers this sort of support.

Impact on pupil skills

Two assertions pervaded all the responses about the impact of the classroom libraries on pupils' abilities to use books:

- all participants and leader-teachers agreed that each teacher's creativity and ability to manipulate materials to suit each subject is crucial in the use of the classroom library. This is in addition to the commitment, performance, activeness and liveliness of the teacher. In one participant's words, 'the size, richness and use of the library by pupils reflects the amount of work the teacher puts in'. They emphasized that the role played by the teacher determines the extent to which the children enjoy and make use of library materials, insisting that it is easy for the teacher to destroy the love of reading and other skills or to stunt the development thereof;

- all participants and leader-teachers stressed the important role played by each pupils' individual cognitive capabilities in the successful attainment of skills. This principle of individuality, which explains the existence of the syndrome of fast and slow learners and which implies individual capability, is supported by Hanna (1965), Norton (1991) and Radebe (1995: 119), in acknowledging that every child is an individual whose individual interests, values, capabilities and needs have to be taken into cognisance in learning situations and when making reading-related recommendations.

Independence in accessing the library

Concerning how long it took pupils to access the library independently, all participants and leader-teachers explained that children take different time spans as some are faster than others. In general they estimated that within a week pupils begin to frequent the library depending on the teacher's encouragement. In addition, the time pupils take to access the library independently depends on the previous class - if the previous teacher is not interested, the pupils get to the next level without the inclination to access the library. If the pupils were motivated in the previous class the next teacher simply needs to nurture what has been instilled.

Reading

Regarding reading, the participants and leader-teachers concurred that reading is a skill which is basic to all others. The level at which and the pace with which this skill is inculcated in the pupils impacts on the learning of all other skills discussed in this chapter. They claimed that improvement in reading was noticeable from level to level - when they cope at the next level the conclusion is that they were taught in the previous level. Exceptions both ways were reported, that is, fast readers and slow readers for whom sometimes it becomes a big struggle and a challenge for the teachers.

Selecting fiction independently

According to all participants, this is the easiest skill for the pupils to grasp, although again, the teacher's direction and encouragement is crucial.

Using reference materials

All participants and leader-teachers concluded that at the beginning pupils need a lot of supervision and encouragement in using reference materials, especially to choose from the right levels. Progress depends on the individual pupil and the teacher's input. If the teacher does not give supervision and guidance, pupils do not select relevant materials but tend to grab whatever catches their eyes. Another conclusion by all participants is that teachers' commitment, depth of knowledge and activeness are important attributes. Selecting relevant materials for projects depends on the teacher's motivation and on input at the previous level.

All participants and leader-teachers declared that READ's reference books are good as they are colourful and contain pictures which makes it possible even for Grade 1 pupils to start using them with independence from about 3 weeks. By the time they get to Grade 5 they are sufficiently independent.

Critical thinking skills

Regarding the time, after initiation to the library, it takes learners to display critical thinking skills, all participants and leader-teachers agreed that the improvement is really noticeable and felt as they move from level to level. This also depends on the type of teacher they have had in terms of being skilled and committed. From Grades Two or Three pupils display these skills depending on how much the teacher puts in. The estimation was that it took about seven months, at any level, from beginning of the year for the teacher to see and experience the change and to recognize the skills that s/he has been instilling all year.

The time to evaluate any school information skills programme is when the students introduced in their first year reach the sixth form (Sliney in Markless 1986: 24). It is when they proceed to tertiary programmes, the present researcher adds, that one can judge clearly whether the skills are there or not.

Two districts mentioned that pupils do their own evaluations of books; they are supplied with cards on which they rate them in order of interest, explaining why they like one book more than the other. Many participants agreed that it was rewarding to hear pupils discussing the cover of the book and many different views emerging. They start challenging and criticizing one another and they can draw their own conclusions and formulate their own arguments when doing projects. The results are very rewarding because the pupils get used to reading critically. This confirmed Brindley's suggestion (1991: 60) of stressing to students that they are the evaluators and their opinions matter even when they differ from those of the teacher.

Deciphering and formulating viewpoints

The claim by all participants was that by the time pupils get to Grade 3 they can decipher differing viewpoints and can formulate their own, adding that it really depends on the teacher and individual capability of the child. For instance if something the pupils have been taught is presented differently on television they challenge the teacher on it the next day. This means that they can get information from different media and they can relate this information to what they were taught and make connections.

Continuity between classes

One of the greatest concerns expressed by all participants is that of lack of continuity between classes. One teacher's diligence can be easily nullified by the teacher on the next level who is not committed to the skills which have been instilled at the previous level. Factors responsible for this lack of continuity, as raised by the participants and leader-teachers are discussed below:

- many principals are not committed to READ programmes, do not go for training and so do not insist on making READ workshop attendance and library use compulsory. This has already been reported under the section on training, where it is also a problem. The lack of support by a number of principals was also said by a library adviser to be the biggest problem leading to failures in programme implementation. Another library adviser supported this, stating that the schools which implement READ's methods to the best advantage are the schools with involved principals who work with their teachers as a team and who formulate a library policy for the whole school. As she put it, 'the odd reluctant

teacher in these circumstances is usually carried along on the wave of peer pressure and is forced to make extra effort'. This confirms Markless's view (1986: 22) that if the impetus comes from one person it may spread outwards influencing others who see the effectiveness of integrating information skills into the curriculum. On the other hand, practice may remain patchy. Participants and leader-teachers also raised the problem of unqualified teachers who are never sent on courses.

Ray's suggestion (1994: 8), that the introduction of a whole-school policy for information skills would solve many of the problems such as lack of support from head and teaching colleagues, is worth taking seriously. A school-based approach which requires the development of a whole-school policy on information skills was recommended earlier by Markless (1986: 22) to address the problem mentioned above. Such a policy could be translated into practice gradually. A further suggestion by Markless (1986: 23) is that outcomes of curriculum development (through in-service courses) for instance focusing on resource-based learning, should be ongoing with initial INSET courses followed by school-based or consortium-based work. All participants, in their overall suggestions, argued that a school-based monitoring system is necessary to maintain a high standard of consistency amongst teachers. This system would be useful for motivating teachers to stay on track and to support training for new teachers and also to run refresher courses for those who have been working with class libraries for some time. A shared commitment to teaching skills for lifelong learning and for motivating students to take responsibility for their own learning was raised by Kuhlthau (1993: 11) as one of the underlying principles for implementing successfully a process approach to information skills.

Participants, leader-teachers and library advisers suggested that READ should canvas as many principals as possible, since they have a lot of success with those who are already genuinely involved. They agreed that the chances of winning in this area would be strengthened by the Education Department declaring the READ programmes compulsory for all teachers and principals. This would also avoid destruction of what has been inculcated when pupils moved to other schools or to other levels;

- one library adviser reported that staff changes, especially if a supportive teacher or principal is replaced with a non-supportive one, adversely affect continuity. Leadership problems in a school were reported by all in the study as damaging to continuity in the running of classroom libraries;

- the other factor which affects continuity is that of lack of funding. Already library advisers and leader-teachers have reported that, due to lack of funds, it was no longer possible to provide materials. One library adviser reported several requests from schools new to her circuit, who

have seen READ libraries and teachers' and pupils' work, but who they will not be able to accommodate unless they get more funding.

Cost-effectiveness

The fact that READ is audited frequently with detailed financial statements being made available to the stakeholders, the public and funders, is indicative of its confidence in its programmes and their effectiveness in relation to costs. Although it has not been all smooth-sailing, READ has had regular funders for years and it is only logical that funding would not have continued if donors were not convinced of the cost-effectiveness of READ's classroom libraries and supporting programmes.

As reported earlier, pupils in READ schools have accelerated their language proficiency skills by up to two years. In financial terms, this must surely reflect one of the best returns on investment in all education funding and spending (Le Roux and Schollar 1996: 24). This was confirmed by an observation which was made by all participants and leader-teachers, that is, that pupils from READ schools, formerly and still mainly black, do not struggle to get into mixed schools in the city where entry and admission is preceded by an interview. A number of instances were cited in which READ pupils have not been held back in terms of entry level as is 'normally' the case for pupils from previously disadvantaged schools. These comments confirm the value of the classroom libraries and the programmes which accompany them

Parental involvement

Parental involvement is a strong feature of the READ programmes as the Trust emphasizes it at all levels as part of teachers' professional development. The issue of parental involvement cannot be romanticized: the country has to face the fact that the majority of parents are illiterate which makes the issue of involvement in their children's education a problem. In some cases parents are involved, genuinely, but each situation is different. For instance the participants from urban schools reported that they had a measure of success whereas those from rural schools advised that the parents needed a lot of counselling because of this lack of involvement. An inferiority complex, arising from illiteracy, reportedly played a role in countering genuine involvement of these parents. As the participants asserted, this issue of parental apathy requires further in-depth investigation, if solutions are to be found.

Additional suggestions

Participants made a number of other suggestions, all on the understanding that the national, provincial and local education authorities would pledge full support for the READ programmes:

• *certification*

Participants would like certification after a number of training sessions; this would be an incentive for all teachers to become involved, especially as the certificates would be useful in career progression. Consequently one would assume that such certification would be recognized by education authorities and rewarded. Since READ is already issuing performance certificates which secure teachers credits from the Natal College of Education (NCE), a further suggestion was for the certification to be linked to and recognized by the Department of Education. The participants and leader-teachers hoped that this would result in more teachers being motivated to give READ programmes the seriousness and attention they deserve;

• *festival of books*

More than one READ Festival of Books (at least twice a year), where everyone is allowed to make a presentation and everyone could be a winner, was requested. The claim by participants is that the festival plays the crucial role of enhancing commitment on the part of all stakeholders, many of whom do attend these occasions. The popularity of festivals was confirmed by a library adviser who reported an attendance of ±80% of teachers, from the schools she used to work in, at the Festival of Books. This also reflects on the popularity of reading, choral verse and drama in the schools;

• *high schools*

Participants wanted READ to be more active in high schools to ensure continuity. Again, this requires full support by the Department of Education.

Conclusion

The findings of this survey on the effectiveness of classroom libraries (as run by READ) within the context of South African education are positive. The classroom library has benefited the education of pupils as well the teachers' performance. It has effected a resource-based education by enriching the learner's learning experience in a stimulating environment. The conclusion is that READ has the infrastructure and expertise to take South Africa through the transformation period with their classroom libraries.

Achievements of the read classroom library

The classroom library provides the pupils and teachers with sufficient materials, relevant to their teaching and learning needs. This is due in part to the flexibility in-built in the READ programme. Teachers have been allowed to accumulate and keep materials according to their felt needs. The materials in the libraries are curriculum-based, because they are developed and designed by READ with this in mind. Their aim is to effect learner-centred learning practices and outcomes-based education. The materials allow grading according to difficulty which is a break with an absurd tradition, adhered to by the apartheid education system, to retard the black child by regarding all children as the same with the same capabilities and interests and as operating at the same level of development. The attractiveness and bright colours of READ materials have transformed the otherwise bleak classrooms into stimulating environments conducive to positive learning experiences. What is more, the location of the books in the classroom makes them easily accessible at all times of day, both by the teacher and the pupil.

Although READ's practice of using only their staff, whom they have trained and exposed to a variety of views, in the selection of materials for the classroom library, was criticized by some of the participants in the focus group discussions, it is safe and works well. To select books, one must have an in-depth knowledge in the field; leader-teachers are involved in selection and their views are always considered. They have been trained in the area and are able to make a contribution which includes teachers' recommendations. Although READ have tended to favour books with black characters and local settings against Eurocentric books, the teachers are allowed to send back what they are not impressed with, as they pointed out in the discussion. And READ do now offer a mix in terms of settings and contexts in their books; they are not restricted exclusively to black and rural settings. This change reflects READ's ability to respond to requests and suggestions from teachers and to reports on pupil preferences.

One finding of the survey is that the role and input of the teacher is absolutely crucial to the success of the classroom library. A major strength is the integration of teacher training into the READ programme. This has enabled teachers to move away from the tyranny of textbooks, instilling in them that knowledge comes from a variety of sources and that there are always more than one view on an issue; it has equipped teachers with critical thinking and information handling skills which the colleges of education have not inculcated in them and which are essential for the successful running of a classroom library. READ training thus makes up for the inadequate curricula in colleges of education. An important achievement is the successful designing of courses and materials which encourage teachers to write new materials with their pupils. The gain is in the fact that learners are taught to carry some responsibility for their learning, and in that relevance to the curriculum is sustained. The evaluation and assessment component

which is built into READ courses and materials is a valuable tool which provides a mechanism for redesigning and rewriting of courses and materials, should the need arise. In this way teachers are never stuck with unusable and irrelevant materials. Follow-up workshops are also a strong feature of READ programmes. Another finding of the survey was that the support of a school principal is crucial. READ has recognized this and has started training programmes in this area.

Once a classroom library is in place, teachers continue to be offered support by READ through their local library advisers. The good interpersonal relations between the READ advisers and the teachers was noted as having a positive impact on the running of the library and keeping teachers committed to the programme.

The classroom library does not limit users in their search for information. Instead it has proved to be a stepping stone to the use of a larger library. It is important to note that the enterprising spirit instilled in teachers by READ, has made teachers take it upon themselves to forge relations with other libraries for the purposes, amongst others, of exposing pupils to more 'technical' library skills and of nurturing their classroom libraries. The findings of the survey also show that classroom libraries have succeeded in inculcating confidence in reading, materials selection skills, and analytical and critical thinking skills in pupils.

The classroom library as a model for the future

In this present climate of 'no funds' for providing each school with a library and a teacher-librarian to run it, READ's classroom library appears to be a most appropriate model. It does not require the school to have a post for a teacher-librarian. Instead, every teacher trained by READ can run a classroom-based library. And the cost of training teachers in classroom library skills is much less than that required for training teacher-librarians. It has been pointed out that at the moment 22,500 schools in South Africa lack libraries. And it costs on average R450,000 (US$105,634) to provide each school with a library, excluding stock. This figure can be compared with the R20,032.50 (US$4,702.50) which is required to equip a school with a set of 15 classroom libraries. Planners and decision makers will need to consider this if a solution to the lack of library resources is found in time for the implementation of the new curriculum. The final objective of a library for every school can still be maintained, as it has become evident that it is possible to build a central library from classroom libraries.

Regarding cost-effectiveness, although we have a sense of the cost of classroom libraries, this survey has found it difficult to relate that cost to their effectiveness. At the same time we have the evidence that pupils in READ schools have accelerated their language proficiency skills by up to two years and are very clearly ahead of their

counterparts in the control schools in terms of both reading and writing. In a simplistic way, the present researcher concludes that these resources are indeed cost-effective, especially as the funders remain loyal after a number of years.

The Centre for Education Policy Development in 1994 recommended that READ should service all nine provinces of South Africa. Certainly their programmes are totally in accord with DoE's *Curriculum 2005*. In addition, the READ programme and its materials provide a tool for assessing the specific outcomes outlined by the Department of Education, making it possible to identify performance criteria. READ has given a lot of attention to schools in rural areas, where problems are more extreme and entrenched by greater poverty, geographical and political isolation, fewer employment options, feelings of dependency exacerbated by more bureaucracy and traditional authoritarianism and resistance to change. The national, provincial and local departments of education can learn a lot from READ regarding ways of bringing rural schools on board.

It is unfortunate that READ do not have an endless supply of funds and funders to extend their resources to every school and every teacher. As we have seen this already causes problems in continuity from class to class and from school to school. What is now needed is support from the Department of Education. For example developing a whole-school policy on the compulsory use of classroom libraries will have to have the full support of the Department. And the issue of parental involvement in rural schools is still one to be addressed. This is a rather big and complex area which requires the involvement of the Department of Education. A lot of research is needed to address issues such as the suggested counselling to deal with deep-rooted problems of an inferiority self-concept, apathy and general non-involvement of parents in their children's education. Where adult literacy projects are in place, some improvement is witnessed. Most of all, direct financial support from the Department is required if READ is to extend its programmes on the scale needed.

Notes

1. Gwala is a superintendent in education management in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, Pietermaritzburg.

2. The terms learners and pupils are used interchangeably in this chapter.

3. There is an on-going debate in South Africa about the concepts of public and community libraries. In this chapter, they are all referred to as public libraries serving the communities within which they are situated.

4. It should be stressed that this study was neither commissioned nor solicited by READ. It is not an examination of the READ programme but rather an assessment of the modality of classroom libraries. READ already has a strong internal programme evaluation system of its own. At the same time READ has been supportive in providing the necessary information for this study.

5. The conference on School Learners and Libraries was held in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal in November 1995. It aimed at considering ways to make learning resources more accessible to school learners.

6. Participants expressed discomfort at having to make suggestions which sounded like demands from READ. They recognized that READ was giving them and their pupils a wealth of learning experiences, a responsibility that should have been shouldered by the Department of Education.

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Chapter four - Classroom libraries: South Africa

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Thuli Radebe

Background

Socio-economic and political context

The Republic of South Africa occupies the southern extremity of the African continent, covering a total area of 1,219,080 sq. km (Hutcheson 1998: 944). It has common borders with Namibia in the north-west, with Botswana in the north, and with Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Swaziland in the north-east, whilst Lesotho, lying within the eastern part of the Republic, is entirely surrounded by South African territory (Hutcheson 1998: 944). Since the new dispensation of 1994, the country comprises nine provinces, namely, the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, North West, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Northern Province.

According to preliminary estimates of the size of the population of South Africa produced by the Central Statistical Services (CSS) in October 1996, there are approximately 37.9 million people in South Africa. This figure surprised the CSS which had projected approximately 42.1 million in 1996 (CSS 1997: 4). It was the first time that all the people of South Africa were counted as members of a united democratic nation (CSS 1997: 7). By province, in millions, 7.7 are in KwaZulu-Natal; 7.2 in

Gauteng; 5.9 in Eastern Cape; 4.1 in Northern Province; 4.1 in Western Cape; 3.0 in North West; 2.6 in Mpumalanga; 2.5 in Free State; and 0.7 in Northern Cape. The same estimates inform us that more than half (55.4%) of the estimated population of South Africa lives in urban rather than non-urban areas. Of the 37.9 million people, 18.2 million (48%) are male, and 19.7 million female (52%).

South Africa's Gross National Income, measured at average 1993-95 prices, according to the estimates of the World Bank reported by Hutcheson (1998: 956), was US$130,918 million, equivalent to US$3,160 *per capita.*

Krige *et al.* (1995: 76) reported that, with a few exceptions, people are 'very badly off in the former homelands and independent states, particularly the former Transkei and parts of KwaZulu-Natal which are both the poorest and most educationally disadvantaged areas in South Africa, whilst the Western Cape and Gauteng are substantially better off than the rest of the country.

Most South Africans are under-educated and under-prepared for full participation in social, economic and civic life (Krige *et al.* 1995: 79). The conclusion was that whites, with small families and high rates of employment are generally well off; Indians are also relatively well off, with moderate incomes prevailing in high density areas, especially in KwaZulu-Natal.

As many scholars of South Africa are now well aware, the corning to power of the Nationalist Party in 1948 brought with it a number of political changes. Key amongst these are the Group Areas and the Population Registration Acts of 1950 which classified people into four main population groups (whites, blacks, coloureds and Indians). Acquisition of land was restricted to areas designated for the different groups whilst the Bantu Authorities Act no 68 of 1951 created homelands (which functioned as politically 'independent' states) to provide land for the various black ethnic groups. However these states were re-incorporated into a unitary South Africa on 27 April 1994. The impact of these changes is explained by Nkomo (1991) and Kaniki (1997).

The national assembly of the new Government of National Unity under the presidency of Nelson Mandela comprises 400 seats of which the African National Congress (ANC), the ruling party, has 252 after obtaining 63% of the vote in 1994. Since the new 'democratically' elected government came into power a number of human rights have been extended to all racial, ethnic and religious groups in the country and new ones added. The country is still undergoing transformation with numerous transition problems due to the damage caused by apartheid. The extent of this damage becomes clear in the following discussions.

Education policies and practices

Number of schools and school enrolment

The Education Foundation (1997: 3) recorded 27,188 schools in the whole of South Africa. Each of the nine provinces is divided into regions which are further divided into districts and circuits. For instance, the Pietermaritzburg Region in the KwaZulu-Natal Province has six districts, one of which has a total of 646 public schools.

Regarding pupil enrolment, CSS (1996) estimated 11,869,000 pupils: 852,000 in the Western Cape; 2,331,000 in the Eastern Cape; 198,000 in Northern Cape; 777,000 in the Free State; 2,572,000 in KwaZulu-Natal; 916,000 in North West Province; 1,414,000 in Gauteng; 915,000 in Mpumalanga; 1,918,000 in Northern Province. De Villiers (1997: 80) estimated that more than 400,000 pupils annually enter that part of the school system (the former black departments) which has a history of inefficiency and low pass rates and which appears to lack a learning culture.

Krige *et al.* (1995: 79) referred to some estimates which put the number of 'out of school' children in South Africa as high as 2.5 million, with between 25% and 74% of African children in large areas of the country being out of school.

Historical overview of education

Nkomo (1990: 1) pointed out the qualitative change which was brought about by the accession of the Nationalist Party to power in 1948. He explained that segregated and inferior education was legislated for Africans in 1953 by the Bantu Education Act, for coloureds in 1963 and for Indians in 1965, providing an ideological cornerstone for the social segregation, economic exploitation and political oppression of these groups to varying degrees, according to race.

Kaniki (1997: 3) reported that the Tricameral Parliament came into effect, alongside the homeland system, through the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act of 1983. This parliament comprised three chambers to serve all interests, including education, of three groups. These were the House of Assembly (HOA) to serve the white population, the House of Representatives (HOR) to serve the coloured and the House of Delegates (HOD) to serve Indians. By the same Act of 1983, blacks in the self-governing territories outside the borders of South Africa ran their own education systems under 'own affairs'. A separate Department of Education and Training (DET) administered black education within the borders of South Africa although this was the portfolio of the Minister in the Cabinet attached to the House of Assembly (Kaniki 1997: 3).

The dispensation described above gave birth to 15 Ministries of Education (some sources estimate 19) in South Africa (Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse 1996: 6; de Villiers 1997: 79). These existed until the first democratic elections of 1994 which led

to the establishment of a single Ministry of Education. The 15 Ministries and their Departments were differentiated along racial and ethnic lines in accordance with the apartheid system and philosophy of Christian National Education which entrenched the unequal allocation of educational resources. One of the aims of apartheid education given by Nkomo (1990: 2) encapsulates the deliberate destructiveness of this system, that is, 'to promote black intellectual underdevelopment by minimizing the educational resources for blacks while maximizing them for whites'. People were brainwashed to believe that the Divine Will had created the Native as a perpetual 'drawer of water and a hewer of wood and that it would be contrary to God's will to change his lot' (Kutoane and Kruger 1990: 9). People were farther threatened with punishment from God if they interfered with that plan by raising the Native from that position.

Although compulsory school education for whites was introduced as early as 1905, it was not legislated for all the other race groups until much later (de Villiers 1997: 76). Baine and Mwamwenda confirmed that education was free and compulsory for all white children for the first ten years; was compulsory since 1979 and 1980 respectively for Asian and coloured children; was neither free nor compulsory for black children (Baine and Mwamwenda 1994: 121) until the passing of the South African Schools Act in 1996 as noted by de Villiers (1997: 76). In their mapping of educational provision in the past, Krige *et al.* (1995: 76) noted:

'gross neglect of African education in the past. The education of coloured people has been relatively better but there are several aspects of serious concern, while education provision for Indians and whites especially is satisfactory.'

In support of the foregoing, de Villiers (1997: 80) noted the inadequate supply of books and other facilities, and a drastic shortage of well-qualified teachers. Sidiropoulos (1997: 183) and Krige *et al.* (1995: 78) reported an enormous shortage of classrooms countrywide. For instance, a shortage of 15,000 classrooms was recorded in KwaZulu-Natal alone in 1995; about 58,600 pupils in Gauteng were without classrooms in 1996; whilst a shortage of 5,000 classrooms was noted in Mpumalanga in 1996 (Sidiropoulos 1997: 183).

Krige *et al.* (1995: 78) set the national average in pupil/teacher ratios at 41:1, the average coloured pupil/teacher ratio being 23:1, that of Indians being 22:1, whilst there are many districts in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape with pupil/teacher ratios of more than 46:1. In the former Transkei, for instance, almost all districts have between 48 and 100 pupils per classroom whereas worse scenarios have been revealed informally by education authorities and teachers in KwaZulu-Natal, with some ratios around and in excess of 70:1 (Gwala[1] 1997). On a positive note Sidiropoulos (1997: 197) has subsequently stated that national goals in this area are 40:1 and 35:1 in primary and secondary schools respectively, to be reached by April 2000.

De Villiers (1997: 80) observed that in addition to the role that schools played in dismantling apartheid, they have also played a major role in undermining a learning culture in South Africa. Manifestations of this breakdown in the learning culture were described by Karlsson (1996: 8), from another source, as characterized by the late arrival of pupils and teachers, early departures, class dodging, truancy and even basking in the sun. A level of apathy in both teachers and pupils is also observable.

Bane and Mwamwenda (1994: 123) observed more extreme and intractable problems in *rural areas* because of greater poverty, geographical and political isolation, fewer employment options, feelings of dependency, exacerbated by additional layers of bureaucracy and traditional authoritarianism, along with resistance to change.

Philosophy of education

Higgs (1997: 100) traced the theoretical foundations of the educational policies which led to the already described fragmentation along racial and ethnic lines to the influence of Fundamental Pedagogics (FP), which was the dominant philosophical discourse in education in apartheid South Africa. Taylor (1993: 3) reported a view that FP was more about socialization than philosophy, and more about instilling passive acceptance of authority than providing students with the conceptual tools necessary for creative and independent thought. Furthermore Higgs (1994: 90;1997: 100) concluded that FP restrained the learner from participating critically in learning interaction (Higgs 1994: 90), thus instilling a spirit of intolerance, and an unwillingness to accommodate divergent perspectives and points of view. This feature strongly characterizes South African political debate today.

The shortcomings/deficiencies of teachers, including their lack of information handling skills, have been pointed out by a number of authors (Stadler 1992; READ 1993; Radebe 1994; Behrens 1995). Radebe (1994: 43) revealed how some of the teachers who register for the Diploma in School Librarianship were incapable of locating and accessing information, analyzing and synthesizing this information and formulating their own opinions. READ (1996: 19) observed that most teachers confessed to a lack of confidence in their own English language proficiency. The problem was clearly conceptualized by READ (1993) reporting that:

'...their professional training has not stressed the importance of reading, or equipped them to involve pupils in the learning process'.

In support, Olën (1995 in Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse 1996: 11) noted the inadequate curriculum in training colleges which does not make taking courses in information skills compulsory, so as to equip teachers-in-training with skills to integrate information skills with their subject teaching.

It is argued that a new philosophical discourse in education is needed in South Africa to liberate South Africa's philosophy of education from ideological hegemony (Higgs 1997: 100) and to bring out a philosophy of education that is open and critical, and which encourages learning, enquiry, discussion and ongoing debate (Higgs 1997: 105). Correspondingly, the *White Paper on Education and Training* (South Africa 1995: 31) stipulated that courses for teachers should equip them with skills to select and use a wide variety of resources, employ methods which cultivate independence in learning, and which demand on-going growth in reading competence. This is in line with Bane and Mwamwenda's recommendation (1994: 126) for curricula which promote reflective education that goes beyond rote learning, while teaching students to critically evaluate the acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, as well as methods of problem-solving, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of knowledge. This is consistent with Kuhlthau's recommendation (1993: 11) of the constructivist view of learning which involves students in learning through the use of a variety of resources. Since this perspective requires access to a wide range of materials for learning, it advocates developing information skills for learning from a variety of sources. The opposite view would be the transmission one which involves acquisition of factual knowledge delivered by the teacher, often called the 'the sage on the stage' method, or by predicted material from a textbook (Kuhlthau 1993: 11).

Curriculum 2005, the new national curriculum for the 21st Century, is based on the ideal of lifelong learning for all South Africans, according to Professor Bengu, the National Education Minister (South Africa. Department of Education (S.A. DoE 1997a). The new curriculum will effect a shift from a content-based to an outcomes-based education (OBE). One of the changes envisaged as a benefit of OBE in the classroom is that learners[2] will know how to collect, gather and organize information and conduct research (Isaacman 1996). It is possibly for this reason that Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse (1996: 13) argued that access to a wide range of learning resources is a critical and essential component of the new educational paradigm and not an optional luxury. One principle which informs the OBE curriculum, and which impacts on the school library and the provision of learning resources is that of learner-centredness (S.A. DoE 1997b). This principle prescribes that the development of learning programmes and materials should put learners first, thus implying different learning styles and rates of learning and teaching to accommodate all types of learners. The role of the school library in this area is therefore to provide learning resources for different phases and levels to meet the pace and needs of each learner (S.A. DoE 1997b). This further implies that educators have to be familiar with such learning resources and how they can be used in the learning environment. The OBE principle of relevance of the curriculum to the current and anticipated needs of the individual (amongst others) is contingent on individuals having skills to source, access, understand and manipulate information. To support this, the discussion document on school library provision standards (S.A. DoE 1997b) identified the school library as a suitable vehicle

to provide resources for learners and acquire basic skills. The question one may ask is: how can this be realized with the desperate shortage of school libraries in South Africa? The principle of promoting critical and creative thinking acknowledges the changing nature of knowledge and the need to accommodate all thoughts and interests of the learner. The strong implication for the school library is that it has to make available learning resources and materials which will accommodate diverse schools of thought and interests, which has not been the case in the past (S.A. DoE 1997b: 18). The document concluded that the most important implication is that school libraries are essential to effective teaching and learning in the country.

The foregoing appears to be positive on a theoretical level. However, it should be noted, as pointed out by de Villiers (1997: 80), that the new system is plagued by the same inefficiency problems as before. This is because the same teachers, who lack motivation and efficiency, and the same apartheid era administrative personnel are still running the system.

Information provision

The South African library and information system is described by the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) (1992: 7) as relatively well established with a variety of types of libraries which, at the end of 1991, were: school libraries; two national libraries; three legal deposit libraries; four provincial library services with numerous affiliated public libraries; 10 independent public libraries; 88 university, college and technikon libraries; 465 special libraries; 91 government department libraries; 10 'national' libraries in the previous homelands; and about 120 resource centres. Despite this well established system, Ferguson nearly 70 years ago (1929: 10) put into perspective the attitude which informed the exclusion of black people from even the most basic of these services:

'The South African is willing... for the native to carry his books to and from the library, but he would feel that an end of his regime was at hand if this same servant were permitted to open these books and read therein... ' (Ferguson 1929:10).

This statement reflects, to some extent, how long the problem of lack of library service provision to black people in South Africa has been in existence. It partially explains the extent to which deliberate damage has been inflicted on black people in this regard. A negligible number of libraries was available to black people from before and through the apartheid era both in the townships and in rural areas. The other races all had, in varying degrees but higher than blacks, access to public and school libraries. Indian and coloured townships were provided with public library facilities. The homelands were each provided with a 'national' library but with insufficient funding, some less than those of urban municipal public libraries (Stadler 1992: 45). This led to their

inefficiency and 'uselessness', although some of them attempted to service schools as well as function as local public libraries. This deprivation of black people of library facilities was part of a grand apartheid scheme of controlling access to information for black people to avoid 'poisoning' their minds against the government. The apartheid scheme described above was sustained by instituting an education system for black people which did not require exposure to extra information and its resources.

It was only after 1973 that some city public libraries opened to all races. These included the Natal Society Library, in Pietermaritzburg, in 1975 and the Durban Central Lending Library in 1980 (Radebe 1996b: 51). Public librarians around the country have seen an upsurge in the number of black people who are patronizing these libraries resulting in shortages of space in a number of instances. Many resource centres, according to Stadler (1992: 45) were established during the mid-1980s by non-governmental organizations as an attempt to fill the gaps in information provision created by apartheid structures. It is within the past three years that a number of public[3] libraries have been built by the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Library Services in black townships and rural areas, a development which has been welcomed with applause.

School library provision

The various education administrative departments were different even in the way they handled library and media matters (NEPI 1992: 9-10), with a few of the departments formulating a specific library policy. Schools administered by HOA and HOD education departments (and to a lesser extent the HOR department) had library policies with good library collections and equipment and which were supported by subject advisers. The DET, the single largest provider of schools for African learners, only officially acknowledged the role of school libraries in teaching and learning in 1983. Prior to this development, there was no legal imperative to provide school libraries or train teacher librarians for African schools, resulting in enormous backlogs and generations of African learners and adults who are library illiterates (NEPI 1992). Krige *et al.* (1990) reported that as many as 76% of all schools in KwaZulu were without libraries. Six years later the situation had not improved with Schroen (Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse 1996: 8) estimating that only 20% of schools have libraries in KwaZulu-Natal. In Soweto, of a total of 317 schools in 1992, only 80 (25%) had school libraries (Stadler 1992: 44), her further estimation being that R2.5 billion (US$587 million) would be required to provide all schools under its jurisdiction with a library.

Table 1. Number of schools and schools with libraries in South Africa. (*EduSource Data News, 17 August 1997*)

Province	No. of schools	No. of schools with libraries	% of schools with libraries

Eastern Cape	5880	433	7%
Free State	2881	341	12%
Gauteng	2233	983	44%
KwaZulu-Natal	5409	955	18%
Mpumalanga	1907	290	15%
Northern Cape	526	175	33%
Northern	4107	205	5%
North-west	2412	340	14%
Western Cape	1770	916	52%
TOTAL	**27188**	**4638**	**17%**

The Education Foundation (1997: 3) reported an alarming shortage of school libraries. Table 1 gives the number of schools with libraries by province. Out of a total of 27,188 schools, only 4,638 (17%) have libraries. This 17% is concentrated mostly in white and Indian schools and to a lesser extent in coloured schools. The Eastern Cape (7%) and Northern Province (5%) have the least number of libraries compared with 44% and 52% in Gauteng and Western Cape respectively. Since KwaZulu-Natal has the second largest number of schools and the largest number of pupils (CSS 1996), it is as poorly provisioned as the Eastern Cape.

It is estimated that it would cost approximately R450,000 (US$105,634) to build one school library with an area of 300 sq. m at a cost of R1,500 (US$352) per sq. m, based on the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Library Service building norms and costs as presented by Bawa (1996: 238). This excludes the stock which would make the figure even bigger. How much it would cost to provide each of the 22,550 schools (without libraries) with a library is unthinkable.

The entire education system, according to Karlsson, Nassimbeni and Karelse (1996: 12) was also characterized by, amongst other things, people in positions of authority lacking an understanding of the relevance of learning resources in libraries. These authors summarized problems in the school library sector which were raised by a number of researchers: huge disparities in budgetary allocations between the different departments, giving rise to widespread absence of facilities, inadequate provision of materials, inadequate physical accommodation and lack of trained personnel, all evident in African schools; a lack of understanding of the role of information resources in teaching and learning, resulting in the marginalization of school libraries in the education sphere; and poor co-ordination between school libraries and other sectors. Karlsson, Nassimbeni & Karelse (1996: 12) observed that the administrative inefficiencies of the DET and many other factors neutralized the impact of efforts by

departments which attempted to address the deficiencies and backlogs by distributing books and other media to schools.

One of the aims of the research by the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) into library and information services (LIS) was to articulate links between LIS policy options and those for education (Walker 1993: 77). The results of this research led to the documentation of provisionally identified policy options for LIS in a future South Africa (Walker 1993: 76). One of the options suggested that library and information services should be governed within the framework of national educational policy with libraries integral to education at the formal and non-formal level (NEPI 1992). According to Stilwell (1995), the TRANSLIS Coalition, which was a collaboration often LIS groupings and was launched in 1992, grew out of co-operation achieved by the NEPI LIS Research Group. The mission of the TRANSLIS Coalition was to develop a national library and information service policy and programme. The discussion document which was produced by this coalition influenced the LIS section in the ANC Education Department's *A policy framework for education and training* which was published in 1994 (Stilwell 1995: 39). Regional branches of what is now the TRANSLIS Forum continue to work in some provinces, such as KwaZulu-Natal, towards producing policy documents which will direct the provision and governance of libraries in the provinces. Another research body, the Committee for Education Policy Document (CEPD), was hired by the ANC in 1994 to further develop LIS policy and to translate policy proposals into implementation plans or strategies. This resulted in the Implementation Plan for Education and Training (IPET) document which notes the central role that information and libraries play in all educational sectors (Stilwell 1995). In its policy proposals the ANC proposed that every education and training institution would provide its learners with access to an appropriate LIS (ANC 1995: 85).

It is true to say that the achievement so far has been the completion of the policy document which provides a national policy framework for school library standards (S.A. DoE 1997b: 3), but the nation is yet to see practical delivery. As de Villiers (1997: 80) warned earlier, the inefficiencies which plagued education still characterize the department today, coupled with an immense backlog which far outweighs available finances. The attitude of the Education Department towards school libraries has also not improved. Baker (1994: 141) indicated that cutbacks had targeted school libraries and the arts. She was later supported by Bawa (1996: 219) who reported the increasing withdrawal of full-time qualified teacher-librarians, because schools cannot afford these positions, and their being given increased teaching portfolios. Bawa (1996: 219) further concluded that the regarding of teacher-librarians as specialist teachers had resulted in no provision being made for them in the teacher/pupil ratio allocations, meaning that only those schools that have been able to raise the funding would be able to afford specialist teachers.

The remainder of this chapter presents an evaluation of the value and impact of the

classroom library as a means of providing access to reading material at the primary level of education. A case study has been made of the classroom libraries provided through the READ Educational Trust[4]. In South Africa the READ classroom library model has been suggested as an alternative to the traditional school library (Karlsson 1996: 3).

READ educational trust

Information about the READ Trust has been gleaned from various annual reports produced by READ. This non-profit-making educational trust which now has 13 regional offices around the country is funded by the South African private sector and foreign donors. It was founded in response to community concern regarding the lack of reading and library services in black townships (Menell in READ 1996: 1). Menell (in READ 1992:3) reported that READ began in 1979 with a small group of volunteers working out of limited space generously made available by St John's College. A Board of Trustees guides the macro affairs of READ and, together with elected regional committees, guides the policies of the READ Trust (READ 1991).

The mission of READ is:

'To help people throughout South Africa to develop their reading, writing, learning, information and communication skills so that they can become independent life-long learners' (READ 1996: 1).

The organization has clear objectives which aim to improve and enrich the learning experiences of all learners by promoting learner-centred teaching methods in a stimulating environment, thus providing them with various essential learning skills.

The READ programme consists of the most practical training programmes for principals, librarians, teachers, student teachers and community workers to inculcate in learners independent learning skills and improve language competencies through the use of books and other materials; it provides library resources as well as ongoing monitoring of projects to ensure that agreed objectives are met and that materials provided are used by educators and learners to improve reading and communication skills across the curriculum (Menell in READ 1996: 3).

The Training Centre in Braamfontein (Gauteng Province) provides the focal point for READ's work in schools, colleges and communities (READ 1996:7) by co-ordinating READ's materials and course development and specific training projects. It is at this training centre that READ trainers and leader-teachers attend a series of professional courses at the beginning of each year, which gives them a thorough understanding of

READ's philosophy and methodology and the confidence to monitor and train on their own.

READ is further strengthened by its in-house assessment and evaluation process which involves the teachers assessing themselves, as well as being assessed by their colleagues or principals, and by READ staff. The data is used by READ to make decisions about revision of courses, development of materials and retraining of staff (READ 1995: 5). All READ courses clearly demonstrate how assessment is linked to specific outcomes and performance criteria (READ 1997:16), which is why READ boasts of:

'the growing capacity to evaluate outcomes in the classroom with a considerable degree of accuracy and to use those evaluations both as benchmarks and as a basis for comparison with situations in which our programmes are not offered. That capacity has already demonstrated most emphatically the measurable and highly cost effective value of our programmes in the classroom' (Menell in READ 1996: 3).

An opportunity to look back and take account of the entire process was recommended by Kuhlthau (1993: 13) who declared that assessing the process as well as the product at the end of the project was an essential part of the process approach to information skills.

Read programmes

- *programmes for teachers*

READ's *leader-teacher programme* is often described as an invaluable force for sustaining the READ training programme. It began in 1990 with the intention of training a corps of teachers (selected by READ's co-ordinators in its 13 regions of operation) in core READ courses and their support materials. The leader-teachers are chosen for their leadership qualities, their dedication to their profession and their excellent teaching commitment. They are encouraged to share their skills in the use and making of teaching aids through the running of workshops with colleagues in surrounding schools (READ 1997: 10).

The *primary school programme* (PSP) is a continuum of courses designed to improve the professional skills of language and subject teachers and librarians while improving the language competence and cognitive development of the children. This programme enables them to move from traditional rote learning to a child-centred, story-based approach which promotes active learning (READ 1996: 7).

The *high school programme* involves the development of courses. It has concentrated

on the development of information skills. This has led to a module on Information Skills being included in the college syllabi (READ 1996: 8).

The *partnership for change programme* is a focused series of courses in Educational Management for Change. It consists of 14 modules in effective school governance which is offered to departmental officials, principals and the broader school community, equipping them with the necessary skills to become essential players in decision making and implementation (READ 1997: 18). Qualification criteria for the Diploma in Educational Management for Change, endorsed by Damelin, have been formulated jointly by READ, Damelin (a private college) and 20 representative principals from Gauteng schools.

Opportunities for the certification of READ programmes have begun to emerge (READ 1995: 7). For instance, teachers who have attended READ courses are offered credits by the Natal College of Education in Pietermaritzburg when they register to further their qualifications. The University of Port Elizabeth includes modules from READ courses in the diploma course offered as part of its in-service teacher training programme. The incentive of formal recognition and accreditation from the Education Department would motivate teachers to apply the underlying theories and philosophies of a resource-based approach to learning English (READ 1997:7).

- *materials development*

READ's materials development initiative designs courses and materials which are inexpensive and are aimed at encouraging teachers to write new material with their pupils (READ 1996: 12). READ's approach follows international trends in language and literacy development, especially trends in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The courses and materials provide teachers with the methodology demonstrated at training courses (READ 1993: 10) and the resources to implement the changes required by new educational policy (READ 1997: 23). READ's system which grades materials according to difficulty, does not tie them rigidly to particular school standards. An important conclusion is that 'the notion that all children in a given classroom are at the same level of development is a patent absurdity, perpetuated by teacher-centred classroom practices and by the illusion of uniformity promoted by an over-dependence on text-books' (READ 1995: 8).

The flexibility, in terms of level, that is built into READ's materials means that it is possible to distribute the same materials to pupils of differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds, providing a way of unifying and democratizing the classroom experiences of all school-going South Africans (READ 1995: 8). This is in line with Ray's recommendation (1994: 9) of a range of materials suitable for different levels of ability, e.g. puzzles, quizzes, competitions, pathfinders for the most popular subjects. As

commented in a READ's annual report: 'by contrast the argument that different sectors of the population require different learning materials could be seen to represent exactly the forms of cultural and racial segregation favoured by the architects of apartheid' (READ 1995: 8).

To collaborate this view, Radebe (1995: 120) discounted the practice of restricting children to books which supposedly depict familiar settings, on the grounds that the practice was used by the apartheid government to justify and enforce a separate and inferior education for black people, and on the premise that what is familiar to one black child is not necessarily familiar to every black child.

READ materials

READ's materials are described briefly below:

- the *Big Books* contain original, previously unpublished stories which have been carefully selected, tested and edited to meet the needs of non-mother tongue English learners in South Africa (READ 1996: 12). The illustrations, drawn in full colour by professional artists, represent a wide range of artistic styles, media and techniques;

- each *Picture Story Pack* contains a series of eight full-colour posters, six Little Books with copies of the posters in story sequence and a Teacher's Guide (READ 1996: 13). The objective is to stimulate pupils to tell or write stories based on a sequence of story posters, to develop visual literacy and to improve cognitive skills such as temporal sequencing, relating cause and effect, and predicting outcomes. The material is flexible and can be used for various levels of ability, and in any language;

- the *Afrika-Tales* are richly illustrated books, each containing one story based on indigenous oral tales from all over Africa (READ 1996: 13). The Afrika-Tales are intended for group and individual reading and aim to encourage independent reading and study skills;

- *theme packs*, which reportedly explore themes in the new curriculum, enable teachers to develop language, literacy and learning skills across the curriculum, whilst providing children with models for accessing and processing information from various forms of non-fiction texts and visual presentations, as well as teaching life skills.

Special projects

READ runs a number of special projects which all support a basic premise that reading is the key to life. Some of the projects are summarized below (READ 1997: 9):

- the *Teachers ' Training College project* provides a cost-effective way of intervening in education to assist student teachers in improving their own reading and information skills, while at the same time introducing them to a variety of appropriate teaching strategies (READ 1995: 7). READ has already made an impact in this area by, for instance, facilitating the formation, in KwaZulu-Natal, of a College Librarians' Association which has developed into a strong lobby group which has been able to tackle the Provincial Education department on matters of policy (READ 1997: 11);

- through the *Sunshine in South Africa Pilot Project,* Sunshine books are presented in colourful boxes and are graded according to reading ability in packs containing 20 Big Books and 44 Little Books. The books are all story-based and cross-curricula in content. They have been cross-referenced to the specific learning outcomes of *Curriculum 2005,* they are easily translated into other languages and lend themselves to the local development of material;

- the *Festival of Books* (FOB) which involves dramatizations of stories and choral verse, explores ways in which stories can be used to develop pupils' language skills (READ 1997: 13);

- the *READathon,* which may involve holding story reading and storytelling performances, or organizing reading sessions at the (public) library, or motivating children to read a certain number of books in a certain time, is a national literacy awareness campaign (READ 1997: 13);

- as part of the *IDT/ODA* (*now DFID*) *15 Schools Book Project,* the Independent Development Trust (IDT), through a network of 11 regional trusts, has built 12,000 classrooms all over South Africa since 1991, in rural and urban primary and secondary schools. In support, DFID (the British Government's Department for International Development) funded a two-year project to supply 15 completed schools with libraries of UK and local books as well as complementary training. The British Council which was asked to manage the project asked READ to select the material and conduct the training. The project has been completed, to be followed by its evaluation in 1998 (READ 1997: 13).

Read's role in the new education paradigm

Various national documents on teacher training, curriculum development and national qualification framework are being applied to curriculum development at provincial levels. Here READ plays an active role, since the changes government is planning to introduce in education and training have always been part of READ's philosophy (READ 1996: 12). READ already offers in-service (INSET) and pre-service (PRESET) training in active, child-centred teaching methods and outcome-based learning. Increasingly READ is working with educational authorities, subject advisers and college lecturers in this regard.

Baker (1994: 141) observed that cutbacks at formerly white schools started with libraries and the arts, implying that there is little chance of savings being channelled into new libraries. As a consequence, the only way out for schools in the townships is to rely on organizations like READ for some time to come, if they are not to remain completely deprived of books.

The IPET document (Centre for Education Policy Development 1994) recommended that READ should service all the nine provinces of South Africa by offering fully designed training programmes, including the train-the-trainer programme.

READ is negotiating with various education departments to use its programme to assist the implementation of *Curriculum 2005*.

Evaluation findings

A report, based on a survey of pupils participating in READ's programmes on reading and writing skills, drew a number of important conclusions (Le Roux and Schollar 1996: 18-22). Some of these are reported below.

- the findings point out the dire need for attention to be paid to the reading skills of black pupils;

- The READ schools are very clearly ahead of their counterparts in the control schools in terms of reading and writing - the READ schools outperformed their control school counterparts by between 189% in Std 3, 151% in Std 4 and 104% in Std 5 (Le Roux and Schollar 1996: 20). Pupils in READ schools have accelerated their language proficiency skills by up to two years. In terms of their reading scores they are ahead by 18 months whilst in terms of writing scores they are over two years ahead at the same stage;

- there are major differences (over 60% on average) between the urban schools and the rural schools in terms of pupils' reading performance which READ (1996: 18) attributes to lack of exposure of the rural farm school children to books, newspapers, magazines, television, radio and various other forms of communicative media in English;

- the selection of reading materials is a vital and critical element in the process. South African children, especially those in the deep rural areas, have special needs and requirements. There needs to be a definite focus on those needs when it comes to the selection and writing of materials suitable for South African conditions;

- the role of the teacher in a book-based approach cannot be overestimated. The most successful schools visited were those with enthusiastic, motivated and committed teachers who had received good in-service training and back-up;

- READ schools participate voluntarily, without any 'formal' recognition or incentives. [The conclusion was that] with the incentive of formal recognition and accreditation from the relevant educational authorities, teachers would be even more motivated to apply the underlying theories and philosophies of a book-based approach to learning English;

READ's classroom libraries

The information on classroom libraries, provided to primary schools, has also been gleaned from READ annual reports and a paper which was presented by Mrs Cynthia Hugo, the National Director, at a conference[5] in which she described this model.

What is a classroom library?

READ's initial classroom library provision is a selection of about 60 books, consisting of exciting and colourful fiction books appropriate to the child's reading and interest level, non-fiction books closely related to topics on the curriculum (to help the teacher in lesson preparation) and a few reference books such as dictionaries and an atlas (Hugo 1996: 89). These resources are placed in a strong, lockable, portable wooden box which functions both as a storage container and a display cabinet. However any kind of display unit or a library comer could be equally functional. Innovative story-board and poster materials have also been designed to be used together with the classroom collections. In addition, READ has arranged sponsorship for these collections, developed and run training programmes (to show the teacher how to use books to make

lesson content more interesting) for schools in which their boxes are placed (Hugo 1996: 89). Usually the collection is on loan to the teacher from a more central depot/collection which is normally off school premises and materials have to be returned and replenished each term or each month, in order to meet the new curriculum needs of the learners and the teacher (S.A. DoE 1997b: 35). The materials are required to be kept in the classroom and managed by the teacher so as to be as accessible as possible for easy use in the present situation, in which often neither the teacher nor the learner are accustomed to using resources (Hugo 1996: 87). The box is placed where learners, particularly primary school learners, can browse through the books in between other class activities and use them freely. READ has successfully piloted this model in many schools across South Africa. A READ classroom library, as estimated during the NEPI policy exercise, cost R1.335.50 (US$313.50) in 1995, excluding training and delivery costs, with about 15 boxes being required per primary school (Bawa 1996: 239). Thus the cost per school, excluding training and delivery costs, would be in the region of R20.032.50 (US$4,702.50).

The purposes or objectives of READ's classroom libraries are:

- to provide learning resources for teachers coupled with training programmes to show the teacher how to use books to make content lesson teaching more interesting;

- to provide resources for learners to use;

- to enable teachers to move away from the 'tyranny' of textbooks and demonstrate to learners that facts can come from more than one source;

- to enable teachers to demonstrate to learners how knowledge is selected, presented and interpreted in different sources thus leading learners to develop critical thinking and appraisal skills;

- to prepare learners for visits to a central school library or community library through being introduced to book organization and classification, which are essential skills to their future independent study and research skills; classroom libraries should in no way replace the school library but should be seen as a first step towards it;

- to ensure that a reading culture flourishes;

- to add colour and a centre of interest to the classroom (Hugo 1996: 89).

The stakeholders of classroom libraries are the same as READ stakeholders. They are: the READ Trust, the private companies who fund these libraries, elected regional committees which represent the communities, the Board of Trustees, the Development Board, the National Executive, the National Committee, as well as the benefactors, that is, the Department of Education, the schools, principals and teachers who run these libraries.

How classroom libraries are used

Children are first encouraged to use the classroom library by choosing their books for the silent reading lesson. Later they are encouraged to read books in free periods when the teacher is called out of the classroom, when some learners finish a task more quickly than others and after school hours. When learners have learned proper care of books, they are encouraged to take books home and share them with other members of the family. The books, which are selected are at the right level of reading, are aimed at encouraging the teacher and learners to make time for reading, as well as adding colour and a centre of interest to the classroom. Learners must be free to choose the books they read and must be allowed to handle them freely. When they reach the stage at which they need to read for information, the classroom library provides teachers with a gentle way of introducing learners to finding and using books on a particular topic.

Why the classroom library?

It is important to understand the reasoning behind the launching of classroom libraries by READ.

READ noted the bleakness of many classrooms and how the teachers' ability to teach creatively was severely hampered by a lack of resources as well as a need for more professional training (READ 1994: 3). Correspondingly, Hugo (in READ 1994: 10) noted that bleak, under-resourced classrooms could not become 'sites for learning' and that reliance on the textbook alone would continue the practice of rote-learning and teaching. The poor classroom, according to READ (1994), is characterized by a lack of books, teaching aids, visual stimulus; rote learning; a teacher who often lacks confidence; pupils who need greater stimulation; and an atmosphere of rigid discipline; - all characteristic of black schools.

It thus became READ's aim to transform as many classrooms as they could into the 'READ classroom' where teacher and pupils have the best possible opportunity to make education a positive experience (READ 1994: 3). The classroom transformation begins with this 'box library'. To develop the skills of independent reading, team work, peer learning and leadership, READ (1994: 4) have changed the arrangement of desks from rigid rows facing the teacher to group arrangements, a situation which they believe

makes teaching large classes more manageable.

Hugo (in READ 1994: 10) maintained that, on the whole, the classrooms of teachers trained by READ provide a more stimulating environment. This fulfils a requirement proposed by Ray (1994: 8), that is, an improvement of the library image through changes to the physical appearance, the general atmosphere and environment.

Arguments in support of the classroom library model

Hugo (1996: 89) made the observation that most South African children come from homes where very little reading takes place, where there are no books and a reading culture is not understood. A weak book culture and lack of reading in the home has a negative effect on the whole of a child's learning. She thus advised that the most efficient way to compensate for this is to provide children with an intimate and pleasurable knowledge of books. This can be facilitated by providing classroom libraries in all classes and by training every primary school teacher to introduce his/her pupils to books as an integral part of their learning and leisure experience (Hugo 1996: 90). This was supported by Gibbs (1985: 310) when she argued that it is important for pupils to be surrounded by books, particularly if this is unlikely at home. Schonell (1961: 195) confirmed this by claiming that:

'the class library has the great advantage that it is on hand every hour of the school day... teachers can make use of it during lessons by taking books to illustrate particular points, and can lead children to make use of books for many lessons during the school week. Queries raised and problems posed may be dealt with by teacher and pupil acting together at the exact time the need arises... is certainly the most effective means of training children in the use of books' (Schonell: 1961: 201).

Adams and Pearce argued that the class library can be used by the teacher

'to (saturate) pupils with books: books to read, to look at, to get information from; childish books to revert to... books which should be on desks, tables and display racks, not in cupboards or hidden among neatly arranged ranks of undisturbed library books' (Adams and Pearce: 1974: 69).

Hugo (1996: 89) asserted that the very presence of book resources within the classroom means that books and book-related learning are integrated into the learner's classroom experience from the first grade. Bane and Mwamwenda (1994: 129) had advised that every effort should be made to provide classrooms with an adequate number and type of culturally appropriate instructional materials. This was supported by Hugo (1996: 87) in her assertion that the quality of education in a classroom is, to a large extent, dependent on an adequate supply of appropriate resources to make learner-centred

teaching and independent learning possible. She declared that without resources, reliance on the textbook is usually the norm and rote learning is more likely to continue to be common practice.

The greatest strength and advantage of this model is perhaps the close and constant proximity that learners have throughout the school day to a set of appropriate learning resources (S.A. DoE 1997b: 36). Further, although the school is not able to build up and invest in its own library collection, educators and learners benefit by having access to a collection which is constantly replenished with the very latest publications and productions, selected by professional staff. Another great advantage raised (S.A. DoE 1997b: 36) is that implementation of this library model does not require the school to have a post for a professional teacher-librarian. Instead, one teacher needs to perform a co-ordinating role and each teacher should attend in-service training on how to use the classroom library effectively in lessons. This is most important at a time in South Africa when posts for teacher-librarians are being taken away and given to teachers or when teacher-librarians are being given full or heavy teaching loads (Bawa 1996).

In support of classroom libraries, Gibbs (1985: 310) argued that most primary schools do have classroom collections (although this is unfortunately not the case in South African schools) and many teachers would be extremely loathe to centralize these materials. This is because one can never guarantee that the materials will be available when they are needed. (She then refuted this argument stating that if there is a whole-school policy (i.e. a centralized school library) everyone should know well in advance what everyone else is doing.) Gibbs (1985: 310) further claimed that in classroom libraries resources are always, and immediately, accessible to pupils; the teacher can control the resources - important for younger primary children who may be overwhelmed by a central collection if they have yet to learn the skills of location and selection.

Arguments against classroom libraries

The arguments forwarded by Gibbs (1985: 310) against classroom libraries, and in support of the central library are that:

- it makes for economic use of resources;

- it provides a wider range of materials for pupils to select from and therefore, in theory, improves their skills in selecting relevant information;

- it teaches pupils to use a large collection (as compared to a classroom library), which is important if they are to use secondary school and other

libraries competently later on;

- it provides a quiet study area - this is one of the library's functions although it should not be its main one.

Francis (1989: 13) is against classroom collections on the bases that they present a strong potential for duplication. She claimed that as children move up a year they might be pleased to find old favourites, but disappointed to see familiar titles they have read already, or passed over as not to their taste. She claimed that people who make these selections are not always at the chalk face and thus do not always know what children are actually reading. The discussion document (S.A. DoE 1997b: 35) based occasional negative perceptions of this model on the fact that because the classroom library was only offered in African schools, it was, therefore, perceived to be a cheap compromise in providing African learners with some half-hearted form of library provision.

Methodology

Choice of methodology and rationale

The method used to collect data for this study was the focus group discussion. A sample of 29 primary school teachers and three leader-teachers were surveyed on their experiences in running READ's classroom libraries and in using them to offer resource-based programmes using the materials in the libraries. Some information was also received from two READ library advisers.

Focus group interviewing has been identified as the best and a cheap and quick method of research for collecting qualitative data (Kamfer 1989: 7; Day 1991: 389; Widdows, Hensler and Wyncott 1991: 352; Oberg and Easton 1995: 119). The timing of the study coincided with school examinations, a time that is not suitable for involving teachers in additional activities. Not more than two hours of their time on one day was required for the study and this resulted in a very good response rate.

The strength of the focus group lies in providing an opportunity for probing and clarification. This characteristic proved an asset to this study whose objective was to assess a tribute as elusive as 'effectiveness'. The mailed questionnaire method would have been expensive and unreliable since the South African postal system is currently known for its problems. Also this method has many possible potential problems such as the 'no return' phenomenon which the researcher experienced in a previous study (Radebe 1997) and which is well reported in the literature too. Furthermore, many people tend to complete questionnaires as a matter of duty and simply tick and move on, skipping questions which require in-depth responses.

The phenomenon of participants building on one another's comments (snowballing), as described by Kamfer (1989: 8) and Oberg and Easton (1995: 119) was another attraction of focus group discussion to the researcher.

Sample

Although the READ classroom libraries function around the whole of South Africa, the study focused only on three districts within the Pietermaritzburg Region of KwaZulu-Natal Province. This was due to costs as well as time constraints. The three districts surveyed in the study are the Midlands, Pietermaritzburg and Umvoti Districts, as designated by the Provincial Education Department.

Originally only Grade 5 teachers were to be involved in the study. However, after the pilot study, it became apparent that restricting the study to this group of teachers would not be profitable since developmental stage changes in pupils do not follow a pattern which allows surveying one level only. These potentially impacted on the way teachers would be able to comment on and discuss issues, thus enabling the researcher to establish trends in their responses. Therefore, the population of the study was primary school teachers who were running classroom libraries and who had been trained, irrespective of the level of grade they taught. The three leader-teachers (one from each district) were also surveyed, separately from the teachers, on their experiences. This was because, whilst they are leader-teachers, they are also running their own classroom libraries. The three library advisers (one from each of the three districts) also provided information through letters on their experiences, especially relating to the training of teachers and principals and on their experiences at the schools. Their observations were useful.

After securing permission from the READ National Director, Mrs Cynthia Hugo, to evaluate the READ classroom library, the composite list of schools working with READ in the Pietermaritzburg Region was supplied by the READ office in Durban. With the help of library advisers, the researcher separated the schools into the three regions as run by READ. The sampling was done with the help of the three READ library advisers who advised the researcher about which schools were functioning and which were not functioning in terms of READ library programmes, (the aim being to get a mix of the two), and which would be accessible in terms of distance and the possibility of roads. This process produced a sampling frame of 79 schools from which 40 were selected. Only one teacher from each school could be invited to keep numbers in line with the guidelines for a focus group discussion, which limit numbers to between 7-8 (minimum) and 10-12 (maximum) people per group (Kamfer 1989: 7; Day 1991: 389; Widdows, Hensler and Wyncott 1991: 352; Oberg and Easton 1995: 119). The researcher wrote letters to the teachers requesting their participation. In all three regions the leader-teachers distributed letters on behalf of the researcher and helped in

organizing the meetings. In total, 29 teachers from all three regions participated in the group discussions, giving a 73% response. The 29 teachers who participated (7, 9, and 13 from each of the 3 districts) were all from schools which were functioning. Those from the schools where the classroom libraries were not put to maximum use did not come to the discussions.

Data collection and analysis

A semi-structured interview framework was designed by the researcher. This framework was used in the pilot study and adapted accordingly thereafter. The instrument (framework) was divided, informally, into sections which addressed different but related aspects of the issues under discussion. The indicators addressed, reflected in the questions asked, included some which are reflected in the objectives of classroom libraries as given by READ and listed earlier. These objectives identify skills which are supposed to be inculcated in learners through the use of classroom libraries. In those cases objective-related research questions were generated, in line with an assertion by Tameem (1992: 16).

The first section of the instrument was thus aimed at addressing the issue of provision and availability which led to the indicators of availability, accessibility, and sufficiency. The second section addressed relevance including materials selection, the curriculum, sufficiency of numbers of books and type of materials. The third section of the instrument addressed the issue of staff training, including follow-up sessions. The fourth section addressed impact, which covered independence in accessing of library, independence in selecting materials, inculcation of analytical and critical thinking skills (deciphering and challenging of differing viewpoints, formulating their own arguments and drawing conclusions) and reading skills. This limited the number of questions to 21. Although this exceeded the suggested 14 to 15 pre-determined questions arranged in a logical order (Oberg and Easton 1995: 119), 21 questions were manageable.

To make the participants relax and to provide a familiar and non-intimidating environment as suggested by Kamfer (1989: 8) and Day (1993: 389), the researcher involved the participants in deciding how the room should be arranged. Tea was offered whilst the researcher welcomed the participants and thanked them for their time. After introductions the purpose and objectives of the study were explained and placed in the context of the broader South African education. This procedure was followed with all groups as suggested by Kamfer (1989: 9). Permission to record the discussion was requested whilst personal confidentiality was guaranteed as advised by both Kamfer (1989: 9) and Tameem (1992: 16).

Group discussions lasted for an hour and a half to an hour and three quarters each, which corresponds with Day's suggestion (1993: 390) that a focus group discussion

lasts one to one and a half hours only.

The intention was to collect both qualitative and quantitative data but since there was always an overwhelming agreement on issues, quantity was not an issue (no need for frequency counts). The researcher regarded differing on an issue from the groups by one or two people as 'rare event' data and did not report on it unless the comment was of particular importance, as advised by Widdows, Hensler and Wyncott (1991: 355). The group's responses were summarized to determine the extent of agreement.

Participants were encouraged to build on one another's insights, a process viewed by Oberg and Easton (1995: 119) as offering participants security, encouragement, excitement and stimulation to participate in a group discussion and to make further comments on discussions initiated by their colleagues.

The researcher's status as external evaluator who was not involved personally with READ enabled the participants to relax and 'pour their hearts out' about their experiences with the libraries. The fact that they did not know the researcher's attitude to the organization is likely to have dissuaded them from either aiming to appease or to displease the facilitator with false responses. A measure of genuineness/authenticity was ensured by this factor.

The first step after all discussions was transmission of data of each section from audio-tapes and written notes. The researcher did a contents analysis after organizing comments by topic and editing them in sequential order until broad themes emerged, a procedure which was suggested by Kamfer (1989: 8) and Widdows, Hensler and Wyncott (1991: 355).

Problems

A major weakness of focus groups, to which the researcher cannot attest from this study, is that data obtained cannot be easily generalized to the larger population (Widdows, Hensler and Wyncott (1991: 352).

The first limitation in the present study was that only the 'good' teachers turned up for the discussions, although that in itself confirmed a problem which was raised by all participants, leader-teachers and library advisers, that is lack of commitment by many teachers.

The aim of the study was to evaluate classroom libraries for effectiveness and cost effectiveness. A few comments on these indicators are necessary to put another major limitation in perspective. *Effectiveness* of classroom libraries is not a straight forward phenomenon and it was difficult to measure in this study. This corresponds with major

conclusions which Van House and Childers (1993: 1) drew from some research, firstly that effectiveness (which they view as an enigma) is a multi-dimensional construct, meaning that no single measure of effectiveness is sufficient to describe an organization. Secondly, no single definition of organizational effectiveness will suffice. In this study, trying to establish in practical reality, the best approach and the best indicators for measuring effectiveness of classroom libraries, was no easy matter!

Measuring cost effectiveness was another difficulty. To address this indicator, the researcher has commented on her observations and reported on comments relating to cost effectiveness, made in the literature as well as by READ staff.

Findings

In this section teachers who participated in the discussions are referred to as participants[6], whereas leader-teachers and library advisers are referred to as such.

Availability of materials

Size and sufficiency

All participants agreed that at the time of the survey their libraries contained more than the 60 items first supplied; in some instances they were double the original size. This was due to the fact that, although they were allowed to exchange libraries with READ, these libraries were in fact never returned to the organization. There was a measure of flexibility on the issue which enabled READ to deal with schools on an individual basis. Instead the classroom library had been increased through additions, with exchanges only between classes within the same schools. The average class size was ± 35 (up to 40); in eight cases two classes shared a room, resulting in a class size of 70.

The general feeling was that the original 60 items had been sufficient for the number of pupils. When two participants from one district expressed a need for duplication of non-fiction titles, other participants reminded them that the non-fiction in the classroom libraries was not meant to replace textbooks. (A number of people have argued against the use of any library as a storeroom for textbooks.)

Size of a collection cannot alone determine its quality, as it says nothing about the content or condition of the items (Doll 1997: 95). The age of the collection is suggested as one possible measure of quality, that is, how the materials in the library keep up to date with curriculum changes. Since READ materials are curriculum-based, are produced by READ themselves in response to identified needs and their programmes are reportedly ahead of *Curriculum 2005*, good quality is assured. Facilities to replenish

or enlarge the library are easily available - it is a matter of a telephone call to the adviser and if available the materials are delivered. Participants reported that the decision to enlarge or exchange is an internal school's arrangement. Once a pack has been exhausted they are permitted to exchange for different ones if necessary.

Although the participants and leader-teachers were generally happy with the materials, even so they expressed a need for more and different books around the middle of the year. They all agreed that the need for more was not a reflection of insufficiency on the part of the READ library but rather a reflection of 'greed for more' on their part and that of the pupils, which had been aroused in them by READ. One of the participants stated that, 'as with anything one enjoys in life, one starts noticing and hunting for more books'. They claimed that READ has trained them to be active, instilled an inquisitiveness in them which makes them always look for more, which they are also fostering in their pupils.

Need to access other collections

To satisfy this 'greed' and generally to support the curriculum, participants expressed the need to access other libraries in town. The other libraries they access for all types of materials, including fiction, non-fiction and reference, are the Natal Society Public Library, the Teachers' Education Library and the Tembaletu Community Resources Centre. The necessity for teachers to access information sources from beyond the school is well supported in the literature.

Kuhlthau identifies access to outside sources through technology as one of the elements of success in the implementation of the process approach to information skills (1993: 16). One would argue that a resource-based education is one process approach to information skills. In providing a variety of materials to create an environment of critical examination of information, Callison suggested that emphasis may need to be placed on acquiring special index resources that in turn lead to a greater use of interlibrary loan. At the same time greater contact with resources, beyond the school, through the community networks maintained by the school library media specialist must be advocated (Callison 1994:49). A consultant for READ suggested that local libraries should be requested to make available copies of the recommended books as a further source of information for students (Brindley 1991: 60). And such networks are nurtured by READ teachers.

All participants agreed that the classroom library was not sufficient for teaching all library skills to both pupils and teachers. Some claimed that what was lacking was only experience of a big library as well as exposure to the 'technical' side of library procedures. To solve this problem, six participants who teach in Pietermaritzburg have entered into a formal arrangement with the Natal Society Public Library. According to

them this has been due to the fact that READ has trained them to be enterprising and to network. Through this arrangement the teachers occasionally take pupils to the library to do block borrowings and take the materials back to their schools to enrich their classroom libraries. At the public library the pupils are put through the mundane library procedure of registering, getting cards, selecting materials and taking them out, for instance. Through this process pupils learn these library practices. By this time they are already acquainted with the organization and classification of the materials in their classroom libraries and thus understand the sequence and the purpose of the bigger library.

One group suggested the institution of exchanges amongst schools as a way of accessing other collections. This is because their relationships with READ started at different times and therefore makes some of them 'old' and others 'new' in terms of their association with READ. The general feeling was that both groups, the 'old' and the 'new', would benefit from exchanges amongst schools. The 'old' schools would send their old books to the 'new' schools which would then get to enjoy those books which might be regarded as 'classics'. The 'old' schools would get access to new books as they often get envious of the 'new' schools when they receive new and more attractive materials.

All participants expressed a need for replenishing on a yearly basis which would require support of the education department to address the problem of funding.

Accessibility of materials

Opening hours

Apart from one school, which only allowed pupils to access the classroom library once a week, the rest said there were no restrictions - it all depended on the situation in each class. They all concluded that the number of times the library can be accessed at one sitting is an internal class arrangement. Generally, once pupils had completed projects they were free to access the classroom library. The only restrictions are those instituted in order to maintain some order especially where schools were running combined classes (Grades 1 and 2) in one room, at the same time.

Some participants in one district reported how in their schools they had collapsed a number of classroom libraries into one central library, but also continued to run their classroom libraries. Each class spends a formal library period in the central library once a week, with free access to the classroom libraries. On Fridays everyone is free to visit the central library. Outside of class activities they are free to access libraries before school assembly, during breaks and after school to encourage them to regard a visit to the library as a leisure activity like any play activity. Teachers had concluded that free

access was rewarding to the child and so some had trained the pupils to 'grab a book when idle' and that 'the best friend you can ever have is a book'. Some had made bookmarks out of those slogans. This corresponds with Baker's report (1994: 136) about a teacher at Walter Teka School in Greater Cape Town (a READ school), who has also created a central library putting all the books from the standard 5 (i.e. Grade 7) boxes into her classroom, making it both a English subject specialist room and a place where children can read whenever they have a chance. There was no formal system for borrowing books, but children could take books home by arrangement with the teacher.

The general observation from the participants was that the teacher's role and attitude to the library was crucial in maximizing access.

Loans

One school reported that it did not allow pupils to take books home for fear of them getting destroyed. (This was the same school which allowed access only once a week.) But all the other participants agreed that, initially, pupils were allowed one item at a time but then it depended on the individual pupil's reading speed and performance.

All participants and leader-teachers reported that Friday is a special day on which pupils are allowed to take out as many books as possible depending on availability. This is when fast readers tend to be restricted by having to wait for books to be returned. It had become normal practice for teachers in such situations to borrow from other classes, especially from those whose books 'lie covered in dust', when they ran out of materials for fast readers. This is done in an attempt to avoid holding back those pupils. In one school they also borrow from higher classes for higher functioning pupils, as well as encourage pupils to use the local community library or the public library in town.

Baker (1994: 136) made similar observations during her study, that is, there are schools in Cape Town who work with READ where books remain inside their boxes, hardly touched. One of the reasons for this is teachers' anxiety about children losing or spoiling the books in which case some teachers opt to keep books safe rather than use them. She also reported on keen readers in the class who go through the books that interest them quickly.

All the participants who allow pupils to take books home reported that they have stopped allowing this for pupils in Grades 1 and 2. From their experiences they concluded that from Grade 3 pupils knew how to be responsible for the books at home and understood why they had to return them, even if the parents were not involved. This must be seen in the light of majority of parents in the rural areas being illiterate and not bothering to take care of books. This appears to further confirm teachers'

anxiety, referred to by Baker, about books getting lost or spoilt.

All the participants reported that they had been trained to devise their own ways of controlling the stock. Schools which had previously belonged to the DET had been supplied with control cards when the department attempted to address provision of libraries. They thus used cards until they ran out and then started devising their own system. The majority of schools had simply prepared special books in which pupils record their own issues and returns reflecting name, title of book and date. Class library monitors are also trained to monitor the situation.

From their observations, the participants concluded that the learners were satisfied with the amount of time they were allowed with the books. A lot of flexibility was reported in a number of situations, which allowed teachers to respond to individual needs in terms of time. This is important since learners, who respond as individuals, are free to exchange books as they need to. According to participants and leader-teachers, learners do plead for extensions of time with the books. As indicated earlier, the more the pupils get acquainted with reading the more they become greedy - they can never have enough!

Training of teachers

The national training workshop for leader-teachers is run every year by READ trainers at READ headquarters in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. The training of teachers is done by the leader-teachers locally under the supervision of, and with, the library advisers. Library advisers and leader-teachers work as a team.

Leader-teachers reported that there are as many sessions as are needed for teachers and as it is possible to provide. All leader-teachers, supported by participants, reported a flexibility in organizing in service-training sessions - sometimes it is a matter of a telephone call to the adviser or a meeting in town occasionally to solve a problem.

Support of principals, etc.

Support from the top for READ's training workshops was reported as crucial. All participants, backed by library advisers, agreed that the biggest problem was lack of support from principals. Where principals are supportive things tend to go more smoothly than where the opposite prevails. In the latter situation, the 'absent' teacher's class might have to stay away from school if their teacher is attending a workshop. In some instances some principals insist on teachers taking a day's leave to attend a workshop or some training. In some farm schools, problems are posed by farm managers who do not understand the occasional absence of teachers from school to attend workshops for the benefit of the pupils. Teachers are often forced to fund their

own travelling costs to get to workshops (a problem when they live far from town), because many principals believe that it is to their own gain.

One library adviser reported that the group of teachers most reluctant to allow learners the freedom to use books effectively are the men teaching higher primary classes, who are often principals; they have come to regard them as their greatest challenge. Their lack of interest was confirmed by the minimum representation of males in the focus groups in the study.

Kuhlthau identified the issue of the principal showing considerable interest in the project as another underlying principle for success in implementing a process approach to information skills. She claimed that, in her study, the assistant principal of the school responsible for scheduling gave the project credence by conducting required formal observations of teachers and library media specialist as they worked with students, and showing the students the importance of the project by talking to them about their work as he believed his role was to 'show a little bit of interest'. The administrators provided the climate for teaming, the time for planning, and promoted, recognized and rewarded those involved in the process approach (Kuhlthau 1993: 16). This was in line with Gibbs' assertion (1985: 310) that in any school it is crucial to have the support of the head teacher if the library is to be seen as important.

At the same time, the participants and leader-teachers admitted that, although some principals are certainly responsible for this calamity, in some instances they are used as scapegoats and the teachers are in fact the culprits. Leader-teachers reported frustration at teachers' passivity, which the participants equated with a negative attitude held by some of their colleagues.

Interpersonal relations

Good interpersonal relations were appreciated by all participants, leader-teachers and library advisers. READ library advisers were commended by all participants and leader-teachers for their acknowledgement of teachers' innovations and suggestions and for treating them with respect and dignity. It is evident that co-operating with READ was always rewarding, according to all participants and leader-teachers. This co-operation was stressed by a library adviser as very important - agreeing that teachers co-operate well by attending workshops and training. The fact that travelling costs are borne by individual teachers confirms their commitment and co-operation and indicates trust between READ and teachers that their goal is common, that is, excellence for pupils. One library adviser emphasized the importance of good personal relationships with teachers commending Eskom for providing funding which has allowed her to work in the area long enough to build up good personal relations and to gain the trust of the principals and staff.

The necessity for genuine mutual respect and appreciation, as contributing members of the instructional team, for the successful implementation of a process approach to information skills, has been stressed by various writers. Success factors in teaching information skills are said to be: a strong team approach to instruction with administrators playing an integral role; and members of the instructional team exhibiting respect for one another (Kuhlthau 1993: 16; Tastad and Collins 1997: 167).

Training problems

All participants agreed that there were no problems with training from the side of READ. Two participants from one district reported sometimes experiencing problems with implementation of what had been learnt. They added that sometimes they were given too many goals and less specific objectives to be achieved. Co incidentally the leader-teacher of the two complainants reported that the number of objectives was sufficient but problems arose out of teachers' inconsistency in attending follow-up workshops and sessions where many objectives are clarified. He was supported in this view by the other leader-teachers. This was also stressed by one library adviser who mentioned that problems related to implementation emanated from the teachers' missing of follow-up visits and meetings at which things are further explained and clarified. One library adviser remarked that keen teachers arrive early whilst those who come late usually end up not grasping what was imparted and then experiencing problems with implementation.

The idea of follow-up workshops was supported by Markless (1986: 22) when he urged for effective professional development which could be through giving clear frameworks, practical examples of alternative classroom approaches and follow-through which involves help given after initial training, through informal channels and through the creation of specific opportunities for discussion, evaluation and the sharing of problems. With professional development in place, reflective professionals who formed the instructional team could, as those in Kuhlthau's study (1993: 17) use their competence and expertise to design, assess, and redesign the process program; as in Kuhlthau's study, they might also be willing to let go of old ways of doing things, and take the risk of trying something new, and be willing to accept the extra work involved.

In relation to the foregoing point, leader-teachers and participants complained that many teachers resist new teaching methods and are set in teacher-centred teaching and in perpetuating rote learning. Library advisers reported that, whilst individual teachers have been converted to the success of getting their pupils 'hooked' on reading and use of books and drama as an important part of classroom activity, other teachers in the same school might have reservations about departing from traditional, more prescriptive methods of teaching and use classroom libraries with reluctance and occasionally hardly at all. This, according to leader-teachers, results in precious materials remaining

covered in dust from lack of use.

This corresponds with Tastad and Collins's conclusion (1997: 169) from their study in which they tried to get teachers to use the writing centre, that it was more difficult to serve the middle-school curriculum teachers because the middle-school curriculum was not process oriented. Assignments were teacher-directed and the middle school teachers did not understand the role of the writing centre. Growing resistance by the teachers was reported. These researchers believe that their efforts failed because the middle-school teachers did not embrace a process approach to teaching and learning.

In the context of classroom libraries, it might pay dividends to follow Kuhlthau's advice (1993: 16) and appoint a co-ordinator to articulate the goals and set the philosophical framework for the use of classroom libraries in resource-based teaching, explaining to the team how the approach fits into the curriculum and is tied to the school goals and objectives.

Classroom libraries and the education system

All participants concurred that, at every workshop, the objectives of classroom libraries are identified, explained and used as guidelines. They are also linked to the skills libraries are aimed at inculcating. At the end of every session, there is evaluation to establish whether or not they have been achieved. They all agreed that evaluation is a very strong element in the successful running of classroom libraries.

Both the participants and leader-teachers agreed with library advisers that there is no conflict between the objectives of classroom libraries and those of the Department of Education. In the old dispensation, participants and leader-teachers reported that they had experienced a conflict when the education department emphasized written work and completion of the syllabus, whereas READ emphasized reading and speaking. READ's philosophy corresponds well with outcomes-based education (OBE). It's flexible approach to the changes in education had allowed it to fully support the new OBE and *Curriculum 2005.* Participants and leader-teachers concluded that READ's classroom library objectives have always been clear, enriching (aimed at giving the child independence in a lot of skills) and are therefore complementary to those of the Education Department, although the programme was not called OBE.

Full support from the national Department of Education was reported by all participants and leader-teachers. One library adviser explained that the support given to READ's work in training and workshops seems to depend largely on the attitude of the Circuit Inspector or the superintendent, further reporting that the attitude of these officials had been entirely positive, with encouragement and invitations to extend READ's work into more schools, which financial constraints have made difficult.

User satisfaction

Selection of materials

All participants reported that materials' selection is done by the READ library advisers, a process in which teachers are not involved. A few participants from two districts felt that they should be involved, as they are the ones working with the libraries and who understand the pupils. The majority disagreed, reminding the complainants that they could not really expect to be brought into the process because READ was only helping out, and READ's selectors were trained to do this specialized job. They felt that such demands should rather be made on their Department of Education. They also asserted that their non-involvement in materials selection was not a problem since it was easy for them to send materials back if they were not satisfied with their relevance. Leader-teachers explained that READ does involve them by seeking their advice on the issue. This system works as they have been trained to appreciate the role and importance of book selection and have been taught how it is done.

Relevance - non-fiction

All participants agreed that the non-fiction materials, which they viewed as a valuable asset in their libraries, support the curriculum. All subjects (including science which the teachers are very excited about!) are represented sometimes all in one book because of 'theme teaching' across the curriculum. In some instances they do not need to use set textbooks because the non-fiction in the class libraries is very good and relevant, that being ensured by the fact that READ develops its own non-fiction (and even fiction) which supports various subjects. The materials are more interesting to use by both teachers and pupils than the set textbooks because they are colourful and up to date and appropriate to levels.

Participants indicated that the number of copies provided poses a problem where a book serves the purpose of a textbook. To address that problem, many teachers have established relations with previously advantaged schools in the city who have made their duplicating facilities available to them. Again, recognition should go to READ for equipping them with networking and enterprising skills.

Relevance - fiction

READ's selection policy has been in many ways a policy of redress, in terms of both supplying books to the deprived, and in terms of trying to choose books that are relevant to the lives of black children. Selectors tried to move away from the Eurocentric books often found in South African schools generally. They sought out books with black characters and local settings (Baker 1994: 136).

Many participants from all 3 groups reported that they themselves had decreased the number of books depicting the rural African context because from their observations pupils displayed no more, or particular, interest in them than in those with European and American contexts. Therefore, giving books with rural African contexts more focus was not necessary even for rural children. Their argument was that rural children would not necessarily live out their lives as rural adults. They further argued that rural children would attend tertiary institutions with urban children and would not enjoy being treated at that level as a special species that has not been exposed, through books, to a variety of situations.

Participants also emphasized that for South African children, it is important to include white people, Indians, towns, town houses, mud houses, the beach, etc., because they all form part of the South African environment. Participants and leader-teachers claimed that sometimes books about white people are approved of and enjoyed by the pupils more than those which supposedly represent black people.

The participants and leader-teachers felt strongly about the issue of westernization. The general feeling amongst them was that black people, like all other races, cannot run away from westernization. Neither can they reject westernization because that is the way they live and have lived since they were born, without necessarily avoiding their traditions. One stated that, 'a so-called western way of life is the only way many of us know and that does not mean that we are rejecting African traditions. We are surviving in the world not only in South Africa'.

Other writers have written about the danger of restricting the background of fiction to what is known. Rural children have dreams and aspirations which are varied and they need to have their imagination nurtured through exposure to a variety of settings. The importance for them being given the opportunity to escape their surroundings even if only in fantasy, like any other child, cannot be over-emphasized (Radebe 1996a: 192-193; Leeb 1990: 30) The attitude today is to help them nurture their 'global' dreams. It was 'normal' in the past to feed rural children a rural education to perpetuate the availability of labour on farms, a practice which is being discouraged in the present atmosphere of transformation.

On the issue of context and familiarity of settings, the socio-cultural background in books has very little to do with their popularity with children (Radebe 1995: 124; Robinson and Weintraub 1973; Tucker 1981; Diakiw 1990; Bennett 1991). Hurst (1993) used African and European traditional folk tales in her study to test (with racially-mixed classes of children around Durban in South Africa) the idea that children respond best (or only) to stories set within their cultural milieu. She concluded from the children's responses that the cultural origin of the story had no relative effect on enjoyment of the story.

Baker (1994) relates a similar scenario. Children from the afore-mentioned Walter Teka School were taken to a book shop and asked to select books for their classmates and to talk about their personal reading preferences. What they enjoyed most were adventure stories. Although they did not reject local books, they were adamant that the setting of a book was not important, the story was. They also claimed that the colour of the characters was irrelevant. Related to this point is the one raised by Brindley, a consultant for READ, who concluded from one of his research projects into black students' reading preferences, that whether the book is written by a black writer is less important than whether the story is enjoyable, relevant and easy to understand (Brindley 1991: 59). Baker warned that in attempting to find relevant local books, selectors may be offering a narrower range than children want, claiming that texts are multi-voiced, and can appeal to different children on different levels.

Perhaps as a result of and in response to all this research on pupils' reading needs and preferences, READ appears to be moving away from their earlier selection policy of favouring books with black characters and local settings and moving to the provision of books with mixed settings.

Of all the fiction in the classroom libraries, picture books are the most popular materials especially for younger pupils because of their attractive colours and illustrations.

Pupils' satisfaction

Participants agreed that pupils were satisfied with the materials, a factor which became evident from their involvement with the materials. Both fiction and non-fiction were thoroughly enjoyed by pupils, especially the fiction and other genres such as drama, choral verse and rhymes, which the participants and leader-teachers claim are valuable for teaching language skills. The reported involvement resulted in improvement in their reading, learning and writing skills, in presentation, vocabulary, expression and in the confidence and the sense of achievement and pride pupils display when they do well.

Support in running classroom libraries

Regarding this issue, participants concurred that READ's help and support is 'just a telephone call away'. Support is also available from colleagues - more recognition to READ for nurturing the team spirit.

Markless (1986: 21) stressed the need for support which becomes even more pressing as there is no universal solution to the problem of developing successful learners and no generally applicable blueprint for the implementation of information skills in all classrooms and libraries and across all subjects. She stressed that it is not possible to

recommend one course or a set of practices that will solve students' learning problems. She therefore proposed collaboration to set up a variety of experiences across the curriculum which will help students learn how to learn. READ offers this sort of support.

Impact on pupil skills

Two assertions pervaded all the responses about the impact of the classroom libraries on pupils' abilities to use books:

- all participants and leader-teachers agreed that each teacher's creativity and ability to manipulate materials to suit each subject is crucial in the use of the classroom library. This is in addition to the commitment, performance, activeness and liveliness of the teacher. In one participant's words, 'the size, richness and use of the library by pupils reflects the amount of work the teacher puts in'. They emphasized that the role played by the teacher determines the extent to which the children enjoy and make use of library materials, insisting that it is easy for the teacher to destroy the love of reading and other skills or to stunt the development thereof;

- all participants and leader-teachers stressed the important role played by each pupils' individual cognitive capabilities in the successful attainment of skills. This principle of individuality, which explains the existence of the syndrome of fast and slow learners and which implies individual capability, is supported by Hanna (1965), Norton (1991) and Radebe (1995: 119), in acknowledging that every child is an individual whose individual interests, values, capabilities and needs have to be taken into cognisance in learning situations and when making reading-related recommendations.

Independence in accessing the library

Concerning how long it took pupils to access the library independently, all participants and leader-teachers explained that children take different time spans as some are faster than others. In general they estimated that within a week pupils begin to frequent the library depending on the teacher's encouragement. In addition, the time pupils take to access the library independently depends on the previous class - if the previous teacher is not interested, the pupils get to the next level without the inclination to access the library. If the pupils were motivated in the previous class the next teacher simply needs to nurture what has been instilled.

Reading

Regarding reading, the participants and leader-teachers concurred that reading is a skill which is basic to all others. The level at which and the pace with which this skill is inculcated in the pupils impacts on the learning of all other skills discussed in this chapter. They claimed that improvement in reading was noticeable from level to level - when they cope at the next level the conclusion is that they were taught in the previous level. Exceptions both ways were reported, that is, fast readers and slow readers for whom sometimes it becomes a big struggle and a challenge for the teachers.

Selecting fiction independently

According to all participants, this is the easiest skill for the pupils to grasp, although again, the teacher's direction and encouragement is crucial.

Using reference materials

All participants and leader-teachers concluded that at the beginning pupils need a lot of supervision and encouragement in using reference materials, especially to choose from the right levels. Progress depends on the individual pupil and the teacher's input. If the teacher does not give supervision and guidance, pupils do not select relevant materials but tend to grab whatever catches their eyes. Another conclusion by all participants is that teachers' commitment, depth of knowledge and activeness are important attributes. Selecting relevant materials for projects depends on the teacher's motivation and on input at the previous level.

All participants and leader-teachers declared that READ's reference books are good as they are colourful and contain pictures which makes it possible even for Grade 1 pupils to start using them with independence from about 3 weeks. By the time they get to Grade 5 they are sufficiently independent.

Critical thinking skills

Regarding the time, after initiation to the library, it takes learners to display critical thinking skills, all participants and leader-teachers agreed that the improvement is really noticeable and felt as they move from level to level. This also depends on the type of teacher they have had in terms of being skilled and committed. From Grades Two or Three pupils display these skills depending on how much the teacher puts in. The estimation was that it took about seven months, at any level, from beginning of the year for the teacher to see and experience the change and to recognize the skills that s/he has been instilling all year.

The time to evaluate any school information skills programme is when the students introduced in their first year reach the sixth form (Sliney in Markless 1986: 24). It is when they proceed to tertiary programmes, the present researcher adds, that one can judge clearly whether the skills are there or not.

Two districts mentioned that pupils do their own evaluations of books; they are supplied with cards on which they rate them in order of interest, explaining why they like one book more than the other. Many participants agreed that it was rewarding to hear pupils discussing the cover of the book and many different views emerging. They start challenging and criticizing one another and they can draw their own conclusions and formulate their own arguments when doing projects. The results are very rewarding because the pupils get used to reading critically. This confirmed Brindley's suggestion (1991: 60) of stressing to students that they are the evaluators and their opinions matter even when they differ from those of the teacher.

Deciphering and formulating viewpoints

The claim by all participants was that by the time pupils get to Grade 3 they can decipher differing viewpoints and can formulate their own, adding that it really depends on the teacher and individual capability of the child. For instance if something the pupils have been taught is presented differently on television they challenge the teacher on it the next day. This means that they can get information from different media and they can relate this information to what they were taught and make connections.

Continuity between classes

One of the greatest concerns expressed by all participants is that of lack of continuity between classes. One teacher's diligence can be easily nullified by the teacher on the next level who is not committed to the skills which have been instilled at the previous level. Factors responsible for this lack of continuity, as raised by the participants and leader-teachers are discussed below:

- many principals are not committed to READ programmes, do not go for training and so do not insist on making READ workshop attendance and library use compulsory. This has already been reported under the section on training, where it is also a problem. The lack of support by a number of principals was also said by a library adviser to be the biggest problem leading to failures in programme implementation. Another library adviser supported this, stating that the schools which implement READ's methods to the best advantage are the schools with involved principals who work with their teachers as a team and who formulate a library policy for the whole school. As she put it, 'the odd reluctant

teacher in these circumstances is usually carried along on the wave of peer pressure and is forced to make extra effort'. This confirms Markless's view (1986: 22) that if the impetus comes from one person it may spread outwards influencing others who see the effectiveness of integrating information skills into the curriculum. On the other hand, practice may remain patchy. Participants and leader-teachers also raised the problem of unqualified teachers who are never sent on courses.

Ray's suggestion (1994: 8), that the introduction of a whole-school policy for information skills would solve many of the problems such as lack of support from head and teaching colleagues, is worth taking seriously. A school-based approach which requires the development of a whole-school policy on information skills was recommended earlier by Markless (1986: 22) to address the problem mentioned above. Such a policy could be translated into practice gradually. A further suggestion by Markless (1986: 23) is that outcomes of curriculum development (through in-service courses) for instance focusing on resource-based learning, should be ongoing with initial INSET courses followed by school-based or consortium-based work. All participants, in their overall suggestions, argued that a school-based monitoring system is necessary to maintain a high standard of consistency amongst teachers. This system would be useful for motivating teachers to stay on track and to support training for new teachers and also to run refresher courses for those who have been working with class libraries for some time. A shared commitment to teaching skills for lifelong learning and for motivating students to take responsibility for their own learning was raised by Kuhlthau (1993: 11) as one of the underlying principles for implementing successfully a process approach to information skills.

Participants, leader-teachers and library advisers suggested that READ should canvas as many principals as possible, since they have a lot of success with those who are already genuinely involved. They agreed that the chances of winning in this area would be strengthened by the Education Department declaring the READ programmes compulsory for all teachers and principals. This would also avoid destruction of what has been inculcated when pupils moved to other schools or to other levels;

- one library adviser reported that staff changes, especially if a supportive teacher or principal is replaced with a non-supportive one, adversely affect continuity. Leadership problems in a school were reported by all in the study as damaging to continuity in the running of classroom libraries;

- the other factor which affects continuity is that of lack of funding. Already library advisers and leader-teachers have reported that, due to lack of funds, it was no longer possible to provide materials. One library adviser reported several requests from schools new to her circuit, who

have seen READ libraries and teachers' and pupils' work, but who they will not be able to accommodate unless they get more funding.

Cost-effectiveness

The fact that READ is audited frequently with detailed financial statements being made available to the stakeholders, the public and funders, is indicative of its confidence in its programmes and their effectiveness in relation to costs. Although it has not been all smooth-sailing, READ has had regular funders for years and it is only logical that funding would not have continued if donors were not convinced of the cost-effectiveness of READ's classroom libraries and supporting programmes.

As reported earlier, pupils in READ schools have accelerated their language proficiency skills by up to two years. In financial terms, this must surely reflect one of the best returns on investment in all education funding and spending (Le Roux and Schollar 1996: 24). This was confirmed by an observation which was made by all participants and leader-teachers, that is, that pupils from READ schools, formerly and still mainly black, do not struggle to get into mixed schools in the city where entry and admission is preceded by an interview. A number of instances were cited in which READ pupils have not been held back in terms of entry level as is 'normally' the case for pupils from previously disadvantaged schools. These comments confirm the value of the classroom libraries and the programmes which accompany them

Parental involvement

Parental involvement is a strong feature of the READ programmes as the Trust emphasizes it at all levels as part of teachers' professional development. The issue of parental involvement cannot be romanticized: the country has to face the fact that the majority of parents are illiterate which makes the issue of involvement in their children's education a problem. In some cases parents are involved, genuinely, but each situation is different. For instance the participants from urban schools reported that they had a measure of success whereas those from rural schools advised that the parents needed a lot of counselling because of this lack of involvement. An inferiority complex, arising from illiteracy, reportedly played a role in countering genuine involvement of these parents. As the participants asserted, this issue of parental apathy requires further in-depth investigation, if solutions are to be found.

Additional suggestions

Participants made a number of other suggestions, all on the understanding that the national, provincial and local education authorities would pledge full support for the READ programmes:

• *certification*

Participants would like certification after a number of training sessions; this would be an incentive for all teachers to become involved, especially as the certificates would be useful in career progression. Consequently one would assume that such certification would be recognized by education authorities and rewarded. Since READ is already issuing performance certificates which secure teachers credits from the Natal College of Education (NCE), a further suggestion was for the certification to be linked to and recognized by the Department of Education. The participants and leader-teachers hoped that this would result in more teachers being motivated to give READ programmes the seriousness and attention they deserve;

• *festival of books*

More than one READ Festival of Books (at least twice a year), where everyone is allowed to make a presentation and everyone could be a winner, was requested. The claim by participants is that the festival plays the crucial role of enhancing commitment on the part of all stakeholders, many of whom do attend these occasions. The popularity of festivals was confirmed by a library adviser who reported an attendance of ±80% of teachers, from the schools she used to work in, at the Festival of Books. This also reflects on the popularity of reading, choral verse and drama in the schools;

• *high schools*

Participants wanted READ to be more active in high schools to ensure continuity. Again, this requires full support by the Department of Education.

Conclusion

The findings of this survey on the effectiveness of classroom libraries (as run by READ) within the context of South African education are positive. The classroom library has benefited the education of pupils as well the teachers' performance. It has effected a resource-based education by enriching the learner's learning experience in a stimulating environment. The conclusion is that READ has the infrastructure and expertise to take South Africa through the transformation period with their classroom libraries.

Achievements of the read classroom library

The classroom library provides the pupils and teachers with sufficient materials, relevant to their teaching and learning needs. This is due in part to the flexibility in-built in the READ programme. Teachers have been allowed to accumulate and keep materials according to their felt needs. The materials in the libraries are curriculum-based, because they are developed and designed by READ with this in mind. Their aim is to effect learner-centred learning practices and outcomes-based education. The materials allow grading according to difficulty which is a break with an absurd tradition, adhered to by the apartheid education system, to retard the black child by regarding all children as the same with the same capabilities and interests and as operating at the same level of development. The attractiveness and bright colours of READ materials have transformed the otherwise bleak classrooms into stimulating environments conducive to positive learning experiences. What is more, the location of the books in the classroom makes them easily accessible at all times of day, both by the teacher and the pupil.

Although READ's practice of using only their staff, whom they have trained and exposed to a variety of views, in the selection of materials for the classroom library, was criticized by some of the participants in the focus group discussions, it is safe and works well. To select books, one must have an in-depth knowledge in the field; leader-teachers are involved in selection and their views are always considered. They have been trained in the area and are able to make a contribution which includes teachers' recommendations. Although READ have tended to favour books with black characters and local settings against Eurocentric books, the teachers are allowed to send back what they are not impressed with, as they pointed out in the discussion. And READ do now offer a mix in terms of settings and contexts in their books; they are not restricted exclusively to black and rural settings. This change reflects READ's ability to respond to requests and suggestions from teachers and to reports on pupil preferences.

One finding of the survey is that the role and input of the teacher is absolutely crucial to the success of the classroom library. A major strength is the integration of teacher training into the READ programme. This has enabled teachers to move away from the tyranny of textbooks, instilling in them that knowledge comes from a variety of sources and that there are always more than one view on an issue; it has equipped teachers with critical thinking and information handling skills which the colleges of education have not inculcated in them and which are essential for the successful running of a classroom library. READ training thus makes up for the inadequate curricula in colleges of education. An important achievement is the successful designing of courses and materials which encourage teachers to write new materials with their pupils. The gain is in the fact that learners are taught to carry some responsibility for their learning, and in that relevance to the curriculum is sustained. The evaluation and assessment component

which is built into READ courses and materials is a valuable tool which provides a mechanism for redesigning and rewriting of courses and materials, should the need arise. In this way teachers are never stuck with unusable and irrelevant materials. Follow-up workshops are also a strong feature of READ programmes. Another finding of the survey was that the support of a school principal is crucial. READ has recognized this and has started training programmes in this area.

Once a classroom library is in place, teachers continue to be offered support by READ through their local library advisers. The good interpersonal relations between the READ advisers and the teachers was noted as having a positive impact on the running of the library and keeping teachers committed to the programme.

The classroom library does not limit users in their search for information. Instead it has proved to be a stepping stone to the use of a larger library. It is important to note that the enterprising spirit instilled in teachers by READ, has made teachers take it upon themselves to forge relations with other libraries for the purposes, amongst others, of exposing pupils to more 'technical' library skills and of nurturing their classroom libraries. The findings of the survey also show that classroom libraries have succeeded in inculcating confidence in reading, materials selection skills, and analytical and critical thinking skills in pupils.

The classroom library as a model for the future

In this present climate of 'no funds' for providing each school with a library and a teacher-librarian to run it, READ's classroom library appears to be a most appropriate model. It does not require the school to have a post for a teacher-librarian. Instead, every teacher trained by READ can run a classroom-based library. And the cost of training teachers in classroom library skills is much less than that required for training teacher-librarians. It has been pointed out that at the moment 22,500 schools in South Africa lack libraries. And it costs on average R450,000 (US$105,634) to provide each school with a library, excluding stock. This figure can be compared with the R20,032.50 (US$4,702.50) which is required to equip a school with a set of 15 classroom libraries. Planners and decision makers will need to consider this if a solution to the lack of library resources is found in time for the implementation of the new curriculum. The final objective of a library for every school can still be maintained, as it has become evident that it is possible to build a central library from classroom libraries.

Regarding cost-effectiveness, although we have a sense of the cost of classroom libraries, this survey has found it difficult to relate that cost to their effectiveness. At the same time we have the evidence that pupils in READ schools have accelerated their language proficiency skills by up to two years and are very clearly ahead of their

counterparts in the control schools in terms of both reading and writing. In a simplistic way, the present researcher concludes that these resources are indeed cost-effective, especially as the funders remain loyal after a number of years.

The Centre for Education Policy Development in 1994 recommended that READ should service all nine provinces of South Africa. Certainly their programmes are totally in accord with DoE's *Curriculum 2005*. In addition, the READ programme and its materials provide a tool for assessing the specific outcomes outlined by the Department of Education, making it possible to identify performance criteria. READ has given a lot of attention to schools in rural areas, where problems are more extreme and entrenched by greater poverty, geographical and political isolation, fewer employment options, feelings of dependency exacerbated by more bureaucracy and traditional authoritarianism and resistance to change. The national, provincial and local departments of education can learn a lot from READ regarding ways of bringing rural schools on board.

It is unfortunate that READ do not have an endless supply of funds and funders to extend their resources to every school and every teacher. As we have seen this already causes problems in continuity from class to class and from school to school. What is now needed is support from the Department of Education. For example developing a whole-school policy on the compulsory use of classroom libraries will have to have the full support of the Department. And the issue of parental involvement in rural schools is still one to be addressed. This is a rather big and complex area which requires the involvement of the Department of Education. A lot of research is needed to address issues such as the suggested counselling to deal with deep-rooted problems of an inferiority self-concept, apathy and general non-involvement of parents in their children's education. Where adult literacy projects are in place, some improvement is witnessed. Most of all, direct financial support from the Department is required if READ is to extend its programmes on the scale needed.

Notes

1. Gwala is a superintendent in education management in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, Pietermaritzburg.

2. The terms learners and pupils are used interchangeably in this chapter.

3. There is an on-going debate in South Africa about the concepts of public and community libraries. In this chapter, they are all referred to as public libraries serving the communities within which they are situated.

4. It should be stressed that this study was neither commissioned nor solicited by READ. It is not an examination of the READ programme but rather an assessment of the modality of classroom libraries. READ already has a strong internal programme evaluation system of its own. At the same time READ has been supportive in providing the necessary information for this study.

5. The conference on School Learners and Libraries was held in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal in November 1995. It aimed at considering ways to make learning resources more accessible to school learners.

6. Participants expressed discomfort at having to make suggestions which sounded like demands from READ. They recognized that READ was giving them and their pupils a wealth of learning experiences, a responsibility that should have been shouldered by the Department of Education.

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Chapter five - Book box libraries: Mozambique

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Wanda do Amaral

Background

Socio-economic and political context

Situated on the south-eastern coast of the African continent and bordering the Indian Ocean, Mozambique extends from the mouth of the River Rovuma in the north (latitude 10° 27') as far as Ponta do Ouro in the south (latitude 26° 52'). Covering a surface area of 799,380 sq. km, it has a border in the north with Tanzania, to the west with Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Swaziland and in the south it again borders on South Africa. To the east (longitude 40° 51'), the maritime coast, which is generally sandy, extends for a distance of 2,470 km. Mozambique plays an important role for a group of countries in southern Africa, that of offering an outlet to the sea (as is the case for Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and the South African province of Gauteng).

In terms of climate, the year is divided into two main seasons: the hot and rainy season which occurs between the months of September and April and the cooler dry season, with very sparse rainfall or even none at all, between the months of April and September. As it has a very irregular rainfall pattern, the country is affected by cycles of either heavy rains (as was the case for example in 1976-1977 and 1979) or very great drought (as was the case for example in 1982-84, 1986-87 and in 1992).

Although the majority of the African population was originally 'Bantu', which in turn encompasses several distinct ethnic groupings, there are also minority groupings of Asiatic and European origin. For historical and political reasons associated with the heterogeneity of the African languages, Portuguese was adopted as the official language. In 1990, the population was officially estimated at 15,656 million inhabitants and the estimate

for 1996 was about 18 million inhabitants.

Having been a Portuguese colony for almost five centuries, Mozambique, led by FRELIMO (the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique), became independent on 25 June 1975 after ten years of armed fighting against colonial domination. In the following year, with the insurgence of a political opposition movement (called RENAMO), there began a period of guerrilla warfare and internal fighting, which finally came to an end in 1992 with the signing of a peace agreement. The single-party government of FRELIMO, which was initially markedly Marxist-Leninist in character, has undergone changes and since the end of 1990 there has been a multi-party democracy and a market economy.

Administratively the country is made up of 11 provinces which are divided into 128 districts and these in turn into administrative localities. Maputo, the capital city (in the south), and Beira (in the centre) and Nacala (in the north) are the most important international sea ports.

The economic policy of the Portuguese colonial administration in Mozambique was directed towards absolute dependence on South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (nowadays Zimbabwe) in the form of an economy which was basically run to offer rail and port services, the provision of a labour force and the setting up of huge foreign plantations for cultivating tropical products for export.

After Independence, the economic and social structures which were inherited were completely distorted and it became apparent that not only had the country to develop but it also had to make wide-ranging and profound changes in all areas. In the period between 1975 and 1985, this work was made more difficult by a number of factors which destroyed much of the existing socio-economic infrastructure:

After Independence, the economic and social structures which were inherited were completely distorted and it became apparent that not only had the country to develop but it also had to make wide-ranging and profound changes in all areas. In the period between 1975 and 1985, this work was made more difficult by a number of factors which destroyed much of the existing socio-economic infrastructure:

- the large-scale sudden exodus of almost all the Portuguese companies, managers and technical personnel;
- armed aggression from the regimes in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa;
- internal armed fighting between the party in power and the opposition;
- a systematic and prolonged series of natural disasters (drought, floods, cyclones).

One of the biggest problems which negatively affected the Mozambique economy was the lack of qualified managers which were greatly needed by an economy which was going through major restructuring. This was caused by the frighteningly high level of illiteracy; at the time of Independence, more than 93% of the population was illiterate; currently the level of illiteracy stands at around 72%.

With the ending of the war in 1992 and with a GDP estimated at US$97 *per capita*, Mozambique was considered one of the poorest countries in the world. It embarked on the process of development by

investigating a whole range of economic activities designed to allow a potentially rich country to make progress.

Educational policies and practices

The current National System of Education (SNE) began to be implemented in 1983 and basically responds to three main objectives:

- eradication of illiteracy;
- introduction of a compulsory schooling system;
- training of managers for the country's socio-economic development needs.

SNE is divided into five sub-systems:

- general education;
- adult education;
- technical and professional education;
- teacher training;
- higher education. and is structured into four levels:
- primary;
- secondary;
- further;
- higher.

The general education sub-system covers primary, secondary and pre-university education:

- *primary* education, from the ages of 6 to 12, covers first grade (years 1 to 5) and second grade (years 6 and 7);

- *secondary* education, from the ages of 13 to 15, covers 3 years (8 to 10);

- *pre-university* education, from the ages of 16 to 17, covers 2 years (11 and 12).

The structure for controlling and providing educational support to teachers, which was partially destroyed during the war and then by changes of minister and modifications to the central directives from the Ministry, is, at provincial level, made up of educational support commissions (CAPs) - consisting of delegates for each subject whose role is to solve educational problems which have arisen in the schools - and at district level by zones of educational influence (ZIPs) - an ensemble of schools grouped by geographic proximity, one of which is the co-ordinator, whose role is to solve any educational problems which might arise.

After Independence, state investment in this sector concentrated on building schools and on implementing literacy and adult education campaigns. The civil war, which devastated the country for years, was responsible for the destruction of part of the school network which then existed. Between 1983 and 1987, at primary and secondary education level, 6,062 existing schools were destroyed and 2,677 closed, representing 44.16% of this

network; 456,534 pupils were affected in the two levels of education in question. Table 1 shows the numbers of students registered in public schools/educational institutions in Mozambique over the fifteen year period from 1980 to 1995.

Private education, which was abolished finally in 1975, became officially accepted again following measures adopted in 1990 and now there are several such schools from primary to higher level.

Table 1. Number of students and number of schools/institutions, 1980 to 1995

Levels	**1980**		**1985**		**1990**		**1995**	
	Students	**Schools/Inst.**	**Students**	**Schools/Inst.**	**Students**	**Schools/Inst.**	**Students**	**Schools/Inst.**
Primary PE1	1387192	5,370	1311014	4616	1260218	3441	1415428	4241
PE2	79899	99	111283	156	116718	169	127294	234
Secondary	9729	19	21623	41	25280	39	34464	50
Pre-university	413	2	2162	5	3343	5	4110	10
Tech. Elem.	2807	13	747	10	98	1	158	2
& Prof. Basic	9897	19	9334	24	7987	24	11968	23
Middle	1047	3	1562	4	1847	6	2404	11
Higher education	836	1	1442	1	3715	3	6186	3

Information provision

The economic constraints which resulted from the long period of fighting and natural disasters is reflected in the very poor state and services of the documentation and information systems found in the country. In the majority of cases, the lack of financial resources and the shortage of qualified staff are the main reasons why library and information services have not developed.

The *National Library*, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, has no financial resources and few qualified staff and acts more as a public library for general reading than as an organization for controlling and safeguarding the heritage of publications by and about the country.

The eleven existing *provincial libraries* (which are also the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport) are in practice the public libraries for the provincial capitals. All these libraries are operating with greater or lesser degrees of difficulty and in most cases with the support of foreign NGOs, support which translates into the purchase of books, subscriptions to periodicals, the provision of some mobile support, financing for study visits to neighbouring countries, participation in regional conferences, etc. Some of the 128 existing districts do have libraries but the number of these is unknown.

The three existing public institutions for *higher education* are served by *libraries* but they all suffer from the same problems:

- lack of technically qualified staff;
- shortage of storage space;
- the small number of sitting areas in reading rooms;
- the almost complete non-existence of photocopying facilities;
- the non-existence of a national budget for purchasing books, which has resulted in almost total dependency on international co-operation.

Most of the ministries, national organizations and central agencies of state and government have *specialized libraries/documentation centres.* The way they have developed is very diverse; whereas some are already using the new technologies to provide the most up to date information, others simply fulfil the passive role of safeguarding collections of tied-up bundles of documents whose content is out of date and irrelevant.

The *Mozambique Historic Archive* forms part of the support structure for studying archival documents and is one of the best libraries on the history of Mozambique and southern Africa, welcoming within its walls pre-university students.

Set up as a planning activity under a co-ordination unit at central level, the *school libraries service* is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education; it was only set up in 1979 but to date no policy has been defined for its development. As it is without the financial or human resources it needs to function properly, the school libraries service is almost non-existent in primary education; it operates extremely badly in secondary and pre-university schools, even when there is a library. Various projects are being carried out with the objective of awakening interest in books and in reading, principally at primary level, although these projects are not being organized by the Ministry of Education but by foreign organizations.

Book box libraries

Since 1982 Mozambique has been the scene of various experiences relating to the use of book box libraries in schools; some of the most notable are:

- projects where the basic objective is the improvement of the teaching/learning process, with the provision of educational materials emerging as one of the supports in this process:

  - the 'mobile' libraries project was the full responsibility (concept, finance and management) of the Ministry of Education (MINED) and embraced all primary schools in the country. (Pre-university schools have also received books from MINED, but not in the form of book box 'mobile' libraries.) This project operated from 1982 to 1984 and constitutes one of the case studies examined in this chapter.

  - the 'moveable' libraries project (packed in metal boxes) formed part of an educational support programme ('Creating the habit of reading') which the French

NGO 'Action Nord Sud' operated in five districts of the province of Inhambane, covering 70 schools at primary level. 12 boxes were packed, each one containing a collection of 59 titles (subjects: Portuguese, mathematics, natural sciences and children's literature). These libraries circulated around 70 schools, staying in each school for one month. Although these libraries continue to circulate, the project was cut back in 1996 because, starting in 1997, the NGO planned to locate a fixed library in each of the schools covered by the project.

According to the person in charge of the project, continuing the programme of circulating libraries would not be sustainable in the future, because the provincial and district education authorities do not have the human resources or materials (principally the transport network) necessary for maintaining access, once the boxes are handed over to the government;

- projects in which the fundamental objective is the creation of a more effective reading environment either in school or locally:

  - the 'portable' libraries were part of a project supported by the Canadian CODE organization and was carried out between 1990 and 1995, involving all primary schools (about 550) in the province of Cabo Delgado. (As there were only 5 secondary schools in Cabo Delgado, they were also included in the scheme.) This project constitutes the other case study examined in this chapter.

The end result of all the projects referred to above was that there was improved access to reading materials for the school population involved.

From the interviews which I have had with the people in charge of these projects, I have come to see that the exchange of information about the work involved in each of these projects was not undertaken satisfactorily. Lessons learnt in one project were not transferred to the next.

Since the central co-ordinating agency of the Ministry of Education (School Libraries Department) does not have a sufficiently strong structure to allow it to do this type of work, the donor agencies prefer to give support at local level, to the geographic areas in which they work and not to the 'system' or 'network' of school libraries, especially since it barely exists.

Aims and objectives

For the 'mobile' libraries (MINED), the beneficiaries were the school population throughout the country aged between 6 and 12 and thus the future teachers of primary education. The objectives were to develop the habit of reading in pupils and the development of a teaching body. Factors critical to the success of the project included:

- the choice of titles being put into the collection;

- the quality of the co-ordination between the central agency (School Libraries Co-ordination Commission) and the link people for education at provincial and district level;

- planning for the circulation of the libraries;

- training for the people in charge of the libraries and their use.

For the 'portable' libraries (CODE), the beneficiaries were the school population aged between 6 and 12 and the teachers in the primary schools in the province of Cabo Delgado. The objectives were to provide culturally appropriate supplementary reading materials and thus to reinforce post-literacy habits by developing the habit of reading at the level of primary education. Factors critical to the success of the project included:

- the choice of titles to make up the libraries;

- the training programmes in the use of complementary reading:

  - training at director level (district education directors, ZIP directors, school heads); their contribution was important to the project objectives being achieved;

  - empowerment of the teachers and technical staff in the Provincial Education Service through seminars lasting one week.

Origins, history and development

'Mobile' libraries

The 'mobile' libraries pilot project was designed and managed by the School Libraries Coordination Commission Agency (now known as the School Libraries Department), an agency which at MINED level superintends all the problems relating to libraries.

The renewed outbreak of war, which resulted in part of the school network being destroyed, along with many of the roads, meant that this project lasted for little more than two years (1982-1984).

At the time, the static school library was practically non-existent as an instrument of educational support. The impossibility of providing a library to each primary school in the country (in 1980 there were about 5,830 schools at this level with about 1,467 million pupils), led to taking up the option of the circulating book box library. With about 3,015 book boxes of three different types (years 1 to 4, urban schools; years 1 to 4 rural schools and years 5 to 6), it was possible, using a termly rotation system, to allow access to books by practically all primary schools in the country. The decision to pack these libraries in strong cardboard boxes was linked to the fact that many of the schools in the country, because they were operating under the cover of trees or in very precarious buildings, did not have the physical space to house the collection; in such cases, the boxes were the responsibility of the head of the school, who kept them in his own house. The forward plans for the project provided for updating and improving the collections and a gradual hand-over of the libraries to those schools which showed that they were able to set up the structure for housing them.

In the course of the project, three evaluation seminars were conducted which brought together all the people in charge of the whole project, including some of the people who formed a link with the provincial directors of education.

The archives which contained almost all the documentation produced about this project have now been destroyed; all the information given was collected in the course of interviews with the then head of the School Libraries Co-ordination Commission.

'Portable' libraries

In 1990, CODE identified Cabo Delgado as the area in which to concentrate its activities. This was a province which had been very little affected by the civil war and 70% of its school network was still operating.

Although Portuguese is the official language and the language of instruction in schools in Mozambique, the reality is that it is a second language and there is a huge need to reinforce people's ability to understand and speak the official language of the country. This could be made easier by introducing supplementary reading material at primary school level. It is becoming increasingly clear that success in introducing these supplementary reading materials is linked to training primary school teachers in how to develop a better reading environment in their schools and communities.

The project, which lasted for five years (1990-1995), was the responsibility of the Cabo Delgado Provincial Director of Education and was managed entirely by Progresso, a Mozambique NGO which has the general social objective of contributing to the development of basic communities, with particular attention to women and children, and aims to raise the living conditions of the population and improve their abilities to manage themselves.

The books for the libraries were purchased in Maputo by Progresso and sent to the Provincial Director of Education in Cabo Delgado; there, the people in charge of the project set up the libraries, packed them in boxes made of material produced locally and sent them off to the district education officers who in their turn despatched them to the schools. This project differed from that of MINED, in that the boxes did not circulate but remained in the school to which they were sent.

Initially, the plan was for the project to make up libraries which each contained 150 volumes (15 titles and 10 copies of each title). However, 46 titles were purchased (over a period), making a final purchase total of 166,663 volumes.

In 1993 the project underwent a positive intermediate evaluation, in the course of which it was established that one of the principal reasons why the all the planned objectives had not been achieved was the poor ability of the primary school teachers to teach the early stages of reading. The positive results of this evaluation led to approval being given for a new project called 'Improving the teaching of reading' in which, whilst maintaining the activities of the first project, there was an emphasis on a component for training teachers in the use of the book box libraries to develop the oral tradition and the ability to tell stories in Portuguese and improve the methods of teaching reading and writing to years 1 and 2.

Functions

The *'mobile'* libraries had the function of supporting the teaching/learning process at primary education level in all schools in the country and of training teachers at this level, by supplying books covering the teaching areas

and reading books for children and young people.

The function of the *'portable'* libraries was to reinforce post-literacy habits in the province of Cabo Delgado by developing the habit of reading at primary school level.

Governance

The *'mobile'* libraries project was conceived and managed centrally by the School Libraries Coordination Commission and operated wholly from a national budget. The choice of books and the organization of the libraries was entirely the responsibility of the co-ordinating agency. The latter then sent them, together with a list of the contents, to the provincial authority using the educational support commissions (CAPs) as the links. These people were responsible for all the activities relating to the libraries; they organized the despatch of the libraries to the ZIPs who in turn sent them on to the schools.

According to the information given during this research, there was not a great deal of understanding at central co-ordination level of how to go about receiving/despatching the libraries in the CAP-ZIP-school circuit. In the schools, the head was the person responsible for the use of the libraries and for receiving/despatching them. When the project was first implemented and in accordance with the norm which became established, the libraries for years 1 to 4 were to stay in each school for one month; requests from several schools meant that the period in which they did stay was extended to three months, which is what had already been established from the beginning for the libraries for years 5 and 6.

The *'portable'* libraries was a project which was conceived and presented to CODE by the Provincial Director of Education for Cabo Delgado. The role of co-ordinator and manager for the project was awarded to the Mozambique NGO Progresso which operated it in close cooperation with members of the Provincial Administration of Cabo Delgado, who were specifically allocated to the work. It was executed at province level. The Provincial Director of Education received the books, put together the libraries and sent them to the district authorities; they were in charge of delivering them to the schools within their jurisdiction.

Target user populations

The *'mobile'* libraries covered the whole of the school population in the country at primary education level, corresponding to around 1,377 million students in about 5,833 schools. The *'portable '* libraries covered the whole of the school population at primary education level in the province of Cabo Delgado, involving around 110,000 pupils and about 2,500 teachers in about 550 schools.

Methodology

Choice of methodology and rationale

For gathering data on the *'mobile'* libraries, the methodology used in the study, because of the problems which have been identified already, was basically a series of interviews with the person responsible for the project and the use of the few pieces of archive material and reports which had not been destroyed.

For the 'portable' libraries, the methodology was similar. A series of interviews were held with the executive secretary of the NGO Progresso and a number of its reports and archive documents studied.

Methods used in data collection and analysis

Statistics, published annual reports and archive material from the institutions responsible for the book box libraries were used collect background information. Written reports and other documentation were a particularly important source of information on the CODE project.

Based on the general picture which was given to this researcher by the initial interviews and after a first analysis of some of the archive reports and documents, the bulk of the data was collected through structured interviews with the people in charge of the projects. These interviews were designed to take account of the data necessary for presenting the case studies but which did not figure in the documentation used or where a reading of the same gave rise to doubts over its interpretation.

Interviews with a sample of teachers or students to gather data on satisfaction and impact did not prove possible. In the case of the MINED project, the situation of instability and mobility among the population (in this case of teachers and heads of schools) caused by the war, together with the destruction of the archives relating to the project, meant that any sampling procedure would be impracticable.

An intermediate evaluation of the CODE project was conducted at the end of 1993, based on a sample of schools in Cabo Delgado. It did not use probability sampling, which is typical in statistics, but rather 'convenience sampling', which is characteristic of qualitative methods, namely selecting elements which will supply information which is pertinent to an in-depth study. The people responsible for the sampling chose two districts in the Province which were among the first where the project was implemented or where there was ease of access. By using the processes of interviews and direct observation, they visited a total of 10 schools in the two districts and interviewed about 25 pupils; they also interviewed teachers, the people responsible for the libraries, executives from the Provincial Education Office in Cabo Delgado and the district authorities for Pemba and Montepuez who were involved in education. The data collected in this evaluation is used in the present case study.

Problems

In respect of the MINED project, the biggest problems lay in the fact that the project archives had all been destroyed (a result of changes to the structures and management organs of the Ministry); the huge level of mobility among heads and teachers of schools throughout the whole country (mainly as a result of the war) meant that there was no possibility of interviewing any of the teachers or heads who had taken part in the pilot project.

Time and expense contributed to the difficulties encountered in collecting data on the CODE project. The lack of information in circulation in Mozambique on this project meant that it was only at the end of November 1997 that this researcher learnt of the existence of the project. The school teaching year in Mozambique is from February to November, which meant no data from the field could be collected until the following year, outside the time limits of the research. In addition, the costs of travelling and staying in Cabo Delgado (a province in the extreme north of the country), amounted to US$1,200, also outside the research, in terms of the funding

available.

Findings

Collection development

Availability. In both cases, these are libraries packed m boxes and handed over to the responsibility of the head of a school (MINED) or of a teacher who has been trained for the work (CODE) and potentially access is easy. However, as people were not used to 'having books' and because there was fear of losing them, the pupils' use of them and the possibility of more pupils reading them was restricted. This not being used to 'having books' also existed amongst the teachers, which meant that they had little desire to encourage the use of the libraries.

In the case of the 'portable' libraries, there were indications that in some schools the books were difficult to access for a variety of reasons:

- the transfer of the active teacher (the only one capable of managing the library) meant that the book box libraries were locked up in a room which was difficult to access;

- the person in charge of the library was a teacher who also taught during the teaching periods; this meant that no attention was given to pupils in the other lessons;

- the concept of the book box library (a wooden box containing books which was in the care of the teacher designated for the purpose of managing it and to which all the pupils must have access) had not been properly assimilated by the heads of the schools and the teachers responsible. This meant that the books were held on to so that pupils could not damage them and, for the same reason, the books were not lent out, the pupils being obliged to read them in school. It should also be noted that the school timetables did not have any periods specifically for the use of the library.

Sufficiency. In the two projects analyzed, the number of titles in a box proved to be insufficient to cover need, when the number of users is considered.

In the 'mobile' libraries, there was only one copy of each title in a box and the number of books in each box ranged from 31 to 76, as can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Number of books in different levels of 'mobile' libraries

Level		No. of books per box
Years 1 - 4	Type A	31
	Type B	35
Years 5 - 6		76

In the 'portable' libraries, each library was made up of 15 titles and there were 10 copies of each title, making a total of 150 volumes. If we consider that 166,663 volumes were purchased to serve 106,465 pupils, this means there were 1.5 volumes per pupil, which is obviously insufficient. There were signs that in some schools the number of books was insufficient to meet the demand and the interested pupils had to wait a long time before being able to read the most sought-after titles.

Relevance. In both projects, the collections were chosen with care, the opinions of specialists and educational experts were sought and account was taken of the different objectives of each of the projects.

In the 'mobile' libraries and mainly in the collections which were destined for level 1 (years 1-4), the subjects were almost exclusively school subjects for supporting the education provided (Portuguese, mathematics, natural sciences). Care was again taken in putting together different collections, depending on whether the schools were located in a rural or an urban environment. The collections destined for years 5-6 included a good percentage (about 40%) of children's and young people's literature as well as the school books.

The 'portable' libraries were made up for the most part of children's and young people's literature, with 1.53% of books being for the teaching of Portuguese and 5.58% for natural sciences. The indicators to which this researcher had access show that the imported books were more in demand than those produced nationally, due to the print quality (mainly the colour).

Selection/acquisition. In both cases, selection was handled by the people in charge of the projects after they had heard the views of teachers and educational experts.

For the 'mobile' libraries, the books were all acquired by being purchased in Portugal and then imported.

For the 'portable' libraries, in year I of the project (covering the schools in 3 districts), the books were all imported from Brazil (about 14,000 volumes); in year II (covering the schools in 3 districts) and in year III (covering the schools in 2 districts), the books were partly imported (about 25,500 volumes) and partly produced locally (about 49,400 volumes); in year IV (covering the schools in 4 districts), there was a small percentage of books imported from Portugal (about 2,550 volumes) and the great majority were acquired from local production (about 24,800 items); in year V (covering the schools in 5 districts) it was not necessary to import as they were acquired from local production (around 21,350 items) and they benefited from a UNICEF offer of around 30,000 volumes. In total, the books purchased represented 82.54% of the total in the collections.

Organization. The libraries were packed in boxes, either cardboard or wood. The small number of the books meant that the contents were easily visible and no organization such as classification or cataloguing proved necessary.

Staffing

For the 'mobile' libraries, the co-ordinating agency for this project had a sector head, with a degree in history and philosophy, who worked closely from 1979-1981 with a Cuban national who was a specialist in school libraries; the co-ordinating agency also had three education experts who had basic training in documentation. During the First National Meeting of School Libraries, held in 1982, it was agreed that at least one person from each of the provincial education authorities (qualified with a degree in education) and answering to them should

act in the province as trainers of the teachers and heads responsible for the libraries in the schools; a small guide on the organization and management of school libraries was prepared and distributed at that time. It is felt today that this preparation was insufficient because, in most cases, these 'trainers' did not pass on the knowledge they had acquired and did not circulate the guide.

One of the objectives of the 'portable' libraries project was 'to develop and carry out training programmes for teachers in primary schools in the use of supplementary reading material'. Throughout the 5 years of the project, a total of 729 teachers and education staff were trained in annual seminars which lasted a week and which were run by a team of provincial trainers, which stayed together for the 5 years. The seminars provided minimal training in the organization and management of this type of library and were accompanied by the distribution of a short guide.

Physical facilities

An advantage of the book box library is that it does not require physical facilities such as buildings, table and chairs, shelving. In both the MINED and CODE projects, the libraries were often used under the trees, which is where even today some schools in the country operate. These libraries do not need a specific 'house' in which to be kept, it being the responsibility of the head or the teacher to keep them in his home outside school hours. and chairs, shelving. In both the MINED and CODE projects, the libraries were often used under the trees, which is where even today some schools in the country operate. These libraries do not need a specific 'house' in which to be kept, it being the responsibility of the head or the teacher to keep them in his home outside school hours.

Finance

Due to the destruction of the archives, there is very little financial data available in relation to the MINED project. Financing was wholly the responsibility of the Ministry of Education via the general state budget. Table 3 gives the costs of the books (i.e. their cover price only). It should be noted that there is no record of the costs of customs charges, packaging (boxes), transport, training, seminars, management, etc.

Table 3. 'Mobile' libraries: cost of books in US$

Level		No. of libraries	Cost of books per library (US$)	Total cost (US$)
Years 1-4	Type A	1 511	41	61951
	Type B	1714	27	46278
Years 5-6		102	191	19482
Total		3 327		127 711

Table 4. 'Portable' libraries: cost of service in US$

	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	Total
Physical resources (boxes and recovery of one library)			2379	17529	4500	24408
Development of human resources (training)	11240	32020	11892	16307	13018	84477

Purchase of books	4973	7000	23994	34434	27018	97419
Evaluation		763		8381	153	9297
Management (Progresso and Prov. Ed. Auth.)	6263	14298	14468	16129	16294	67452
Local production of books	3755	14732	1541	36		20064
Total	**26 231**	**68 813**	**54 274**	**92 816**	**60 983**	**303 117**

The 'portable' libraries project, which covered about 550 schools was wholly financed by the Canadian organization CODE, which contributed 544,432 Canadian dollars. The costs of the project over the five years are given in Table 4.

Both projects were financed centrally, one by central government and one by a donor agency. There were no local financial inputs, whether at the province, school or user level.

Use

For the 'mobile' libraries, the destruction of the archives and the fact that the project was a long time ago, meant that not a great deal could be ascertained on usage. But because there was a lack of effective checks on the part of the co-ordinating agency, it is known that there was little statistical data on the use of the libraries available at central level. Moreover, there was no form of training on how to use the libraries given either to teachers or to school students.

Documents to which this researcher had access show that the Progresso NGO tried to obtain statistical data on use by sampling two districts and three libraries in each of them. The three libraries in the Montepuez district did have papers which were more or less complete. This was quite unlike the three libraries in the Pemba district where, because few statistical data were supplied, no opinion could be formed. One can only conclude that no statistical record was kept in these libraries in relation to the use of the books, notwithstanding the fact that there was an exercise book in each box for recording loans and checking them.

In the statistical sample from the three schools in the Montepuez district, over a period of one year, each of the students visited their respective library 0.33, 1.3 and 1.4 times; in respect of the loan service, the number of loans per student per year was 0.9, 1.1 and 1.3. On the other hand this low level of usage must be weighed against the finding that in some schools, given the small number of books, there were waiting lists for the books which were most in demand.

The evaluation of the 'portable' libraries project also found some cases where, because of the wrong attitude having been adopted by the active teachers and heads, the use of the libraries in some schools was little more than a vain hope, in terms of both reading in school and home loans.

The population covered by both projects, in most cases, did not have access to any other sources of information, which was the basic reason for creating these libraries in the first place. It could not access supplementary reading material through any other means.

Evaluation

Costs and cost effectiveness

For the MINED project, the only data which existed related to the purchase price of the books, is shown in Table 3. However, by adding to the purchase price estimated % costs of packaging and transport (25%), customs duties (5%) and indirect costs (15%), it is possible to arrive at total costs for the 3,327 libraries acquired. These are given in Table 5.

Therefore, given that about 1,349,103 students were served at level one of primary education and 95,591 at level 2, over the two year period of the project's operation:

- the cost of the service per school student at level one was US$0.12;
- the cost of the service per school student at level two was US$2; and:
- the average cost of a book box for level one was US$51;
- the cost of a book box for level two was US$288.

Table 5. 'Mobile' libraries: total costs of service

Level		Cost per book box (US$)	Total cost (US$)
Years 1 -4	Type A	61.87	93486
	Type B	40.76	69863
Years 5 - 6		288.30	29407
Total			192 756

For the CODE project, Table 6 gives the number of book boxes provided against the total cost of the service.

Table 6. 'Portable' libraries: number of boxes provided and cost of service

Year	No. of book boxes	Total cost of service (US$)
1990/91	100	26231
1991/92	117	68813
1992/93	115	54274
1993/94	115	92816
1994/95	128	60983
Total	575	303117

Therefore, given that about 110,000 students were served in 550 schools, over the five year period of the project's operation:

- the cost of the service per school student was US$2.75;

- the average cost of a book box was US$527.

These costs are low. To be able to provide access to supplementary reading materials at an average of around US$3 per student over a five year period is negligible compared to the overall costs of education. However the question must be asked as to how effective the access provided was. It did not prove possible for either project to conduct interviews with users, so it is difficult to make any evaluation in relation to the level of user satisfaction achieved. But the data acquired during the evaluation of the 'portable' libraries project may act as indicators in this matter:

- the fact that people are not used to having books and the fear of losing them restricted free circulation of the books among the pupils;

- 'in many schools the library is almost a secret between one or two teachers';

- in some schools, the books were insufficient to meet the demand, giving rise to long waiting lists for getting hold of a title a person wanted to read;

- the 4-colour books which had good graphics were the most sought after;

- some of the national books were not much sought after because the texts were long and sometimes difficult;

- the fact that there was just one active person per school who was also a teacher during lesson time meant that the pupils in other lessons were ignored.

In short, access to the collections was not easy and once accessed there was an insufficient number of books, some of which not very relevant to need. However, and in relation to the level of user satisfaction, the following may be maintained: the almost total lack of knowledge among the population about books, libraries and how to use them led these users to be very undemanding in terms of the quality of the services provided for them.

Overall, based on the experiences of the two projects, this modality can be judged effective: the costs were low, yet some access to reading materials was provided to a large target population, who had never before had any sort of information provision. Both projects constituted a first and unique experience in the provision of access to information.

Impact

For the MINED project, there is little available data on whether the provision of the 'mobile' libraries improved educational performance or the quality of education. In the various interviews which were conducted with the people in charge of the project, it was maintained that in the three evaluation seminars which were held during the two years, some teachers and heads had affirmed that as a result of using the libraries, their schools suffered fewer repetitions and saw school performances improved.

As for the 'portable' libraries, the results from the sampling carried out during the intermediate evaluation

showed that, mainly due to the poor teaching abilities of the teachers of pupils in the early years, the educational benefits of the libraries on the teaching of reading and writing was not satisfactory. According to the final report on the project, 'the only ones who liked reading were those who could read',... 'to promote the taste for and habit of reading among children, their own teachers must know how to *read* and cultivate this taste for reading'.

Conclusion

Overall assessment

Considering:

- the non-existence of access to information of the school population (primary education) in the country;
- the economic impossibility of providing a library for each school;
- the need to complement the teaching/learning process by the use of a library;

the book box library is a possible and cost-effective solution. It provides the school population with books, the basic tools for creating the habit of reading. The person in charge of the MINED pilot project states that it was a success and that it proved the viability of this kind of access to information. The benefits of the CODE project were obvious in the province of Cabo Delgado.

The main weakness of the 'mobile' book box lies in the need to ensure that the libraries circulate properly and in the need for a functioning transport network. The later experience with the French NGO 'Action Nord Sud' project, which has already been mentioned, confirms that any lack of sustainability of this type of project in the future lies in the missing transport network and in the lack of functioning infrastructures at provincial and district education level.

The biggest weakness of the 'portable' libraries project seems to rest in the teachers' lack of preparation and the non-existence of a methodology for teaching reading and writing.

In both of the projects described, preparation of the managers of this type of library proved to be insufficient both in terms of the quality of training and in terms of the numbers of people trained.

Future prospects for book box libraries

'Mobile' book box libraries cannot be considered as a sustainable modality in the short or medium term because of the poor educational and communications infrastructure. In order to be viable and sustainable, the modality of the mobile book box library presupposes the existence of strong co-ordination at all levels (central and local) and a good transport network or nothing will come of it.

'Portable' book box libraries, which have already been tried out in two provinces of the country with the support

of the Canadian CODE organization, seems to offer a safe solution for providing access to information for the school population when, *inter alia*, the following are taken into account:

- the existence of many schools which operate in precarious conditions, for example under trees (mainly in the rural areas);

- the fact that improving the country's educational system, which is already under way, is a long process which requires economic and human resources which are not totally available.

The modality of the portable library, in boxes, introduced a new library concept (wooden box containing books which are in the care of teachers who are trained for the work and to which all pupils have access); under this concept, the library is moveable, portable, simple, produced locally and may be acquired at low cost.

The success of this modality depends in large measure on the ability of the active teachers who are responsible for the libraries, their ability to use a methodology for teaching reading and writing and to assimilate and apply the new library concept, because those teachers who are not used to 'having books' find it difficult to provide access to them for the pupils.

With positive experience of seven years of activity which has already covered two provinces in the country, it seems that it is up to someone of the stature of the Minister of Education to study and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of this experience, starting with this evaluation, and to design a project which can be phased in so that it can cover all the provinces. Particular attention should be paid to the rural areas where the school population does not have any other form of access to information and to those schools which do not have the conditions necessary for housing a conventional type of library.

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Interviews

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Interviews with two teaching experts who were responsible for the 'Action Nord Sud' French NGO 'moveable' libraries project.

Structured interviews with the Executive Secretary of the Mozambique NGO Progresso.

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Chapter six - Teachers advisory centres: Kenya

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Cephas Odini

Background

Socio-economic and political context

Kenya is located in East Africa and lies between a longitude of 34° north and 42° east and a latitude of 4° north and 4° south. It covers an area of approximately 582,646 sq. km and is bordered by Ethiopia and Sudan to the north, Somalia and the Indian Ocean to the east, Uganda to the west and Tanzania to the south.

Kenya consists of eight areas called provinces. The next lower administrative units are districts, followed by divisions, locations, sub-locations, and villages. The climate varies throughout the country and is determined by topography, altitude and precipitation. Most of the northern and eastern part of the country is semi-arid and less than one-third of the country is arable.

Kenya achieved her independence in 1963 after a protracted struggle during which the indigenous people regained self-determination and control of their destiny from the British colonial administration. Since then, the country has enjoyed political stability.

On the basis of census statistics, Kenya's population increased from 5.4 million in 1948

to 16.1 million in 1979 (Kenya. Central Bureau of Statistics 1995). Estimates from the 1979 population census indicated that the population growth rate in Kenya was 3.8% per year. The population is currently estimated at 27 million.

The population growth rate in the urban areas is more than 7% per annum. The population of the capital city, Nairobi, has increased from 897,000 in 1980 to approximately 2 million in 1997. This increase can be attributed in large part to rural-urban migration.

As a result of high fertility and declining mortality, Kenya is characterized by a young population. Almost 50% of Kenya's population is less than 15 years of age. The momentum generated by high fertility and declining mortality implies that the population growth rate will remain high for some time (Kenya. National Council for Population and Development 1994).

In Kenya, agriculture remains the leading sector in stimulating economic growth. The most important foreign exchange earners are coffee and tea in the agricultural sector and tourism in the non-agricultural sector. Although the government has played an important role in the economy, private enterprise has been given more weight in the development process and today accounts for about two-thirds of the gross domestic product (GDP).

The economy's performance, which has attracted the attention of international bodies and many individual researchers, has tended to elicit two types of responses. There are those who have admired Kenya's economic achievements terming them as 'remarkable', especially when considered against the general background of other African countries. There are others, however, who have tended to regard the country's economic record since Independence as superficial, arguing that its experience gives a good example of 'economic growth' without 'economic development', where the benefits from growth do not reach the really poor target groups (Ikiara 1988).

In spite of the upswings and downswings that the Kenyan economy has undergone in the post-Independence era, its performance can be said to have been generally impressive. GDP in real terms has grown fairly strongly, for example, real GDP increased by almost three times between 1964 and 1984 from K£715 million to K£1,900 million. The gross investment, wage employment, government expenditure and revenues and other indicators all show immense expansion of macro-economic variables during the period.

Educational policies and practices

Kenya government has continued to invest heavily in education because it believes that

education and training are important ingredients for creation of the manpower required for all aspects of national development. In addition to government contributions, Kenyans have joined hands in the true spirit of self-help ('harambee') to build and maintain physical facilities in schools and colleges for the education and training of their children.

After Independence in 1963, it was clear that the education system inherited from the colonial era did not meet the social, political and economic needs of independent Kenya. The first post-Independence Kenya Education Commission, under the chairmanship of Professor Ominde, was set up in 1964 to review the whole of Kenya's education system and has influenced and guided national policy for education ever since.

Subsequent reviews of the educational system in areas of structure and curriculum have been carried out through the following commissions: Ndegwa 1971; Gachathi 1976; Mackay 1981; Kariithi 1983; and the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond 1988. All these commissions testify to the important role that education and training continue to play in nation building.

The Mackay Report of 1981 recommended changes in the structure of education from the former 7-4-2-3 to an 8-4-4 system of education, which was implemented in phases starting with primary education in 1985. The 8-4-4 system is a three-tiered formal education system composed of a free eight-year primary cycle followed by a four-year secondary school cycle and a four-year university education or other skill training programmes.

The 8-4-4 system of education offers a practically-oriented curriculum and has introduced technical and vocational skills which students graduating at the various levels of the schooling system can use for either self-employment, salaried employment or further training, thus providing a wide range of employment opportunities.

Important as it is in the creation of employment opportunities, there are still many limitations to the implementation of the 8-4-4 education system in the country. One major problem arises from the fact that the 8-4-4 system of education requires expensive equipment in laboratories and workshops which many schools and colleges cannot afford.

Although formal pre-school education is a relatively new development in Kenya, it has already become a firmly established sector of the national education system. Since independence, there has been a rapid growth of pre-primary schools which mainly cater for the three to six year-old age group. There are approximately 18,000 pre-primary

schools catering for 900,000 children in the country.

Primary education is, however, regarded as the basic cycle of the national education system. The programme lasts eight years and aims at providing functional and practical education to the majority of children who terminate formal education at the end of the cycle. At the same time, primary school education caters for those wishing to continue with schooling. Thus the main general objective of primary education, in which the age range is six to fourteen years, is to prepare all children who attend to participate fully in the social, economic and political life of the nation.

Primary education in Kenya is also universal and free but not compulsory. The government took definite steps towards universal primary education through the abolition of school fees for Standards I to IV in 1974 and for the rest of the primary classes in 1979. However, due to the very high growth in population coupled with rising financial responsibilities, the government has adopted a 'cost-sharing policy' to facilitate the provision of basic education for all.

There has been tremendous development in primary education since Kenya became an independent nation. This expansion is reflected especially in the increase in the number of children enrolled in schools, the number of teachers and the number of schools. The enrolment has increased from 892,000 in 1963 to about seven million. Similarly, the number of teachers has increased from 23,000 to 185,000 while schools have increased from 6,000 to 14,000. However, there is a wide regional variation in the participation rate of children aged between six and fourteen years in primary education. Low participation rates are found mainly in the semi-arid and pastoral districts.

The 8-4-4 system of education shortened the time allocated to the secondary education programme from six to four years and expanded the curriculum to include applied subjects. In terms of growth, there has been a very rapid increase in the number of schools and enrolments since Independence. In 1963 there were only 151 secondary schools with a total enrolment of 31,120 pupils. In 1997 the total number of schools had risen to 3,500 and the enrolment to 700,000 students.

Secondary schools fall under three major categories according to the type of management. Firstly, there are schools which are fully financed and maintained by the government. Secondly, there are those which are sponsored by communities or religious bodies but receive government assistance in the form of teachers and sometimes some financial support in form of grants. The third category is the unaided schools. In this group the majority are community 'harambee' (self-help) schools which do not receive any form of government assistance and private schools which are established and run by individuals or groups of individuals on a commercial basis.

The country has five national public universities with a student enrolment of 45,000 and four major private universities (together with other degree-awarding bodies applying for university status). There are three national polytechnics and twelve institutes of technology offering skills training in the rural areas.

Information provision

An overview of information systems in Kenya has been given by this writer in a previous article (Odini 1993). It was observed that the country has a fairly good information infrastructure which forms a solid base on which information services can develop.

The importance of information services in general as a vital resource for national development is unquestionable. There is, however, a need for improved access to information by the various user groups and for the availability of information at the right time and in an appropriate form. It is to be regretted that information systems in the country are so much under-utilized owing to various factors such as the prevalence of information services which have been designed without a proper analysis of the needs of users, high levels of illiteracy and language barriers. However, there is still ample opportunity for information experts in Kenya to stimulate the use of information if more attention is paid to the information needs of the various groups and the communication process among each group of the user community.

Although Kenya has no comprehensive information policy, there are several sectoral policies in the form of legislation, regulations and guidelines, covering, for instance, public libraries (Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) Board Act); archives (Public Archives Act); deposit material (Books and Newspapers Act); Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1982 dealing with science and technology information; and District Focus Circular No. 1/86 on the establishment of District Information and Documentation Centres. Other relevant laws include the Copyright Act, Universities Act, Education Act and Sessional Paper No.6 of 1988.

Kenya's national information systems comprise the nation's libraries, documentation centres, archives, records centres and learning resource centres. These systems are supported and made effective by other agencies dealing with the generation, enumeration, and transfer of information such as the publishing industry, statistical bureaux, telecommunications, informatics and the mass media.

Although little documentation is available on the use of information by the school population in the country, it is believed that this group makes greater use of information services provided in the country than other groups of the user community, for example: farmers and rural communities; professionals in various fields; policy makers; and

administrators. However, the prevailing scholastic methods in the country give little encouragement to the development of free personal enquiry. There is too much dependence on 'chalk and talk' with little library usage, since students/pupils do not need to obtain ideas from various sources to pass examinations. This is unfortunate since it is in early life that a taste for books and the habit of using libraries and their resources or educational materials are most easily acquired (Aina, 1984).

Psychologists emphasize repeatedly the significance of childhood experiences in moulding the adult. It is to be regretted that there is not sufficient locally-published reading material for children in Kenya. Also regrettable is that there is in Kenya no official policy requiring schools (both primary and secondary) to have libraries. School libraries are not given any official support from the government. It is left to the initiative of heads of schools and Parents Associations to establish, equip and maintain libraries in their own schools.

Some head-teachers use some of the funds meant for sports and other related extra-curricula activities to establish and stock their school libraries. Old schools, especially those in urban areas which were established during the colonial period, generally have better school libraries than relatively new ones in the rural areas. These few schools with adequate school libraries include Starehe Boys Centre, Nairobi School, Pangani Girls, Lenana School, Alliance High School (both boys and girls) and Kenya High School. Resources in these libraries comprise both printed materials in the form of books and periodicals as well as non-book media such as audio-visual materials.

Although some school libraries therefore continue to be developed to support the education system, their development is not uniform throughout the country but tends to favour urban schools at the expense of rural ones. This means that the majority of the school population are denied accessibility to a reasonable variety of educational materials.

In order to address the problem of inaccessibility to educational materials by the school population, the Ministry of Education incorporated Teachers Advisory Centres (TACs) in the Inspectorate Section in the early 1970s. Teachers Advisory Centres were established with an aim of enabling teachers in primary schools to access educational materials such as books and audio-visual equipment. It was hoped that the use of Teachers Advisory Centres by teachers would improve their instructional quality and that their pupils would gain indirectly through teachers' improved instruction or through the loan of classroom materials.

A similar initiative took place at the secondary level, with 26 Learning Resource Centres (LRCs) being established during the early 1990s. These were part of a DFID supported programme, the Secondary English Language Project (SELP). An element

within the project was the provision of English language materials and the LRCs were set up to manage these. They aimed to provide materials for those teaching in secondary schools in the district surrounding the LRC. DFID supplied reference and textbooks (not only for English language teaching but in all subjects of the secondary curriculum) and class sets of reading books to each LRC, as well as typewriters, duplicating machines and stationery. The organization Voluntary Service Overseas provided the first LRC managers. However the usefulness of LRCs has been limited by the fact that many schools are not members, either because they are unaware of its services or because they do not want to pay the annual subscription. The LRCs have not been able to become self-sustainable but still rely on donations. Moreover, many of the teachers who were trained through the SELP project, either locally or in the UK, have left secondary schools for better paying jobs in colleges or universities.

Teachers advisory centres

The Kenya government through the School Inspectorate of the Ministry of Education attaches great importance to continuing education programmes for teachers. Teacher education is conceived of as a career-long process in order to avoid situations such as those reported by the World Bank:

'... many schools in developing countries fail to reach or teach children because available resources are not used efficiently and effectively by the teachers concerned' (World Bank Report, 1990).

Kahn (1991) reports that centres for teachers and resources have been established world wide. These centres, despite their varying names (Learning Resource Centres, Pedagogical Centres and Advisory Centres), have the common characteristic of providing classroom support for teachers. The teachers should be given the right kind of support since their potential for development is limitless and their competence is constantly being tested in the class. Recognizing the teachers' arduous task and supporting them in their work is the aim of Teachers Resource or Advisory Centres (Adams 1975).

In order to fulfil their educational responsibility towards school pupils, Ministry of Education officials, particularly school inspectors, education officers, school headmasters, must ensure that a suitable learning environment is provided and that teachers are enabled not only to develop their pupils' reading ability but also to encourage independent learning and the acquisition of good information skills. Pupils should be assisted to develop logical creative approaches to their subjects of study in order to attain the national educational objectives.

Co-operation among the stakeholders and particularly between teachers and Teachers

Advisory Centre Tutors (TAC tutors) is essential to there being an effective collection of resources in a centre. This co-operation is particularly important in the provision in the centre of books and others resources which match pupils' and teachers' needs and in the provision of appropriate resources in general. In order to be able to develop a collection of high standard in terms

In 1978 the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education established 'The Primary Teacher Updating Committee' to examine the possibility of developing and setting up a 'Primary Teacher Up-dating Programme'. This Committee examined the TAC programme in detail and recommended that:

- the role of TACs in advising and updating teachers and in carrying out research at the local level must be made clear to all TAC staff;

- the number of TACs must be increased to give an adequate service to teachers and these centres must be established in central and accessible venues;

- staff must be increased to enable the TACs to fulfil their role effectively;

- TACs should be housed in appropriately designed and equipped buildings. The Committee went ahead and suggested that a TAC should have the following: facilities:

  - lecture, display and home science rooms
  - office and store
  - workshop
  - library
  - day sanitation unit

- resources and equipment:

  - curriculum material currently in use in primary schools, professional reference books including books on the methodology of teaching the various subjects in the primary schools;

  - tools suitable for the making of teaching/learning resources;

- audio-visual resources including: radio/cassette player, overhead projector, slide projector, camera;

- reprographic equipment including: typewriters and duplicating machines;

- a portable generator for use where electricity was lacking;

- home science equipment.

• transport in the form of a van. The Committee noted that it was essential that TAC staff be able to travel with resource materials to teachers in the district;

• adequate finance for the effective running of the TACs. It was suggested that TACs be financed by the Inspectorate Headquarters and that funds be allocated to them through the DEO's Office.

Some of the recommendations made by the Committee, for example: outlining the role of TAC tutor; increasing the number of TACs; addition of more staff; have been implemented. However, due to lack funds, it has not been possible to implement many of the other recommendations.

TACs have benefited from the support provided by DFID from 1992 onwards to the strengthening of primary education in Kenya. The first phase of this support aimed at raising the quality of teaching and learning in the core subject areas of mathematics, science and English by establishing TAC-based in-service training. As a part of this support, book boxes and resource materials, including a package of consumables, were distributed to 239 zonal TACs and 42 district TACs. DFID also assisted with the construction of 61 TACs. However, this support has not been uniformly distributed throughout the country. Those districts which are relatively disadvantaged in socio-economic development have received greater supplies of educational materials than others.

Functions

Teachers Advisory Centres were established to carry out the following functions:

• provide convenient and appropriately equipped centres for updating teachers;

- prepare and produce support materials for use on updating courses and in any follow-up activities required;

- carry out research in primary teaching methods and the use of locally available teaching resources and communicate the results of such researches to the classroom teachers and national curriculum specialists at the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE);

- take an active part in the development of the primary school curriculum by maintaining a close and adequate contact with the teachers and local subject panels, so that relevant feedback may be readily available when research and assessment of various programmes are called for;

- provide educational counselling services not only for the teachers but for the community as a whole;

- act as a receiving centre for various resource materials from agencies like KIE and also act as distributing centres for these materials;

- by working closely with teachers colleges, help expose students to what goes on in primary schools and how to use TACs when they leave college.

Providing access to educational materials was thus one of their functions, albeit one of many.

Governance

The Teachers Advisory Centres, as a national service, are administered by the Ministry of Education's Inspectorate Section. In the field the Teacher Advisory Centres are manned by centre tutors who report to their respective District Inspectors of Schools.

The tutors work in close collaboration with their respective area assistant primary school inspectors and principals of the primary teachers colleges where the centres are situated, since they are responsible for TAC operations and for providing the Ministry of Education with a record and evaluation of their work.

KIE, a body responsible for curriculum research and development, works with the TACs in collaboration with the Inspectorate.

Target user population

The user population comprises teachers in primary schools within close proximity to a TAC, usually within a radius often km. This is common in small-sized and more developed districts which have a higher school population. However, there are more difficult and large districts with few schools spread out at long distances and with poor access roads. It is common in such districts to find TACs located very far away from their target user populations.

Methodology

Choice of methodology and rationale

A preliminary workshop was held in London in September 1997 attended by local researchers including this writer at which the project co-ordinator was the resource person. The workshop participants agreed on a case study approach and went ahead to develop case study outlines.

The case study approach, employing mainly semi-structured interviews, was chosen since it was particularly suitable for providing an in-depth analysis of accessibility to educational materials in Teachers Advisory Centres by the school population. The case study methodology enabled the researcher to concentrate on specific instances or situations and to identify the various interactive processes at work in TACs. Some of these processes would probably have remained hidden in a larger scale survey.

The methodology was found to be particularly suitable since it was felt that it was the only approach that would be able to provide data which would determine efficiency, effectiveness and economy. However, care was taken to ensure that country context in which the Teachers Advisory Centre operated was not ignored since the successes of the TAC could not be determined in isolation, without due regard to the contribution made by other similar modalities such as school libraries. The case study method as applied in this study therefore involved collecting relevant background information or data from schools, school inspectors, education officials, TAC tutors and teachers about the issues involved in accessibility to educational materials by the school population.

Data collection and analysis

Data was collected in general discussions that this researcher held with several teachers, TAC tutors and education officials on several occasions.

Some relevant documents about the country and Teachers Advisory Centres in particular were carefully studied and notes made on them. The documents examined included statistical abstracts published by the Central Bureau of Statistics in the

Ministry of Planning and National Development, the Demographic and Health Survey, the Official Handbook on Kenya. With regard to Teachers Advisory Centres very useful data was obtained from annual reports and several unpublished records and articles written by education officials, school inspectors and TAC tutors.

The main research instrument, however, consisted of a semi-structured interview framework for obtaining information on user satisfaction and impact which was administered to teachers by this researcher assisted by postgraduate students at the Faculty of Information Sciences in Moi University.

The main analytical approach employed in this study was based on a framework developed by Orr in 1993. According to this framework, the concept of 'Goodness' has two basic aspects; 'how good is the service' and 'how much good does it do?' While the first aspect concentrates on capability, potential and latent ability, that is, inputs, the analysis in this study has concentrated on the second aspect, which deals with value, effectiveness and benefits, that is outputs.

In assessing performance, emphasis was placed on economy, efficiency, effectiveness and user satisfaction, market penetration and cost-effectiveness.

Sample

The study was conducted in Uasin Gishu district of Rift Valley Province. The district is divided into zones and a Teachers Advisory Centre had been established to serve primary school teachers in every zone. Six zones were selected for the study based on their geographical location and after consultations between the District Inspector of Schools and this researcher.

Three schools were selected in each of the six zones but an attempt was made to include one school which was in close proximity to the TAC, one which was located mid-way between the TAC and the zonal boundary and one which was furthest or among the furthest away from the TAC. Since there were six zones considered for the study a total of 18 schools were selected.

In each of the sampled schools six teachers were selected for interview employing a stratified purposive sampling technique to ensure that both TAC users and non-users were included in the sample. This was important since the researcher was interested in hearing from both groups - one comprised of those teachers who used their respective TAC and the other group comprised of those who did not. A total of 108 teachers were interviewed in the district.

Problems

At the time when this researcher was preparing to go to the field to collect data, teachers went on a nation-wide strike demanding higher salaries. When the Kenya National Union of Teachers and the government resolved their differences and teachers resumed their normal duties, there were only two weeks left before an early vacation for most of the school population, except for candidates sitting national examinations and their invigilators.

The early end of year vacation meant that this researcher had to make the necessary appointments and conduct interviews with more than one hundred teachers within a period of only two weeks. To resolve this problem, the researcher e-mailed the project co-ordinator in UK to seek authority to involve postgraduate students of Information Sciences at Moi University in data collection; permission was granted.

However, even with the assistance of research assistants (students) it would still have been very difficult to extend the study to another district - a disadvantaged district - and to include the Learning Resource Centres set up to serve secondary school teachers, as earlier planned, since the time available for the case study data collection was so limited. A decision was therefore made to introduce some adjustment in the data collection instruments and to confine the study to Uasin Gishu district and to Teachers Advisory Centres serving primary schools in order to collect sufficient in-depth information or data to make it possible to conduct a thorough analysis and evaluation of the modality.

One other problem encountered during the course of the study was the lack of statistical data for analytical purposes. TAC tutors hardly kept any records, for example the number of users over a given period of time, number of books borrowed, and so forth. In some cases this problem was overcome by taking statistics over a two week period and extrapolating the findings in order to obtain a reasonable estimate covering a longer period.

Findings

Collection development

Data analysis was conducted in order to assess the sufficiency and relevance of the available stock, to identify the selection/acquisition practices employed by the TACs, and to find out the ways in which the collections were organized. Both quantitative and qualitative means were employed to analyze the data.

It is regrettable that although one of the main functions of the Teachers Advisory Centres was to provide convenient and appropriately equipped centres for updating

teachers and to act as receiving and distributing centres for various educational resource materials, data analysis revealed that not one of the TACs studied had sufficient relevant educational materials for the school population that it was meant to serve. Throughout the Uasin Gishu district where this study was conducted, Teachers Advisory Centres appear to be in a state of crisis and this researcher believes that TACs are actually in decline throughout the country. The school population are completely unable to have their information needs fully met by the TACs or Learning Resource Centres in the country.

A typical response given by the teachers in interviews in reply to the question about the sufficiency and relevance of educational materials in the TACs started with the following phrase:

'The materials are not sufficient and are irrelevant to my needs...'

Each TAC had an average of about 800 educational items only, including books, maps and wall charts. The only TAC which had a total stock of more than 1000 items had received aid in the form of book donations from DFID. The books comprised English story books, but these were obviously inadequate in view of the fact that the TAC was meant to serve about 500 teachers.

The subject coverage of the collections available left a lot to be desired. None of the TACs possessed a comprehensive stock to cover all the primary school curriculum subjects. Most of the TACs had reasonably good collections of atlases and wall charts for geography, history and civics, but they all had inadequate stock in other subjects such as science, mathematics, art, craft and music.

Although local subject panels had been established at zonal level to assist TAC tutors in the selection and acquisition of educational materials as recommended by the Primary Teacher Updating Committee of 1978, the subject panels had become dormant in five out of the six zones in which this study was conducted. It was however, encouraging to note that in one zone where some subject panels were proactive the teachers were involved in the preparation and selection of educational materials for their TAC.

Collection development was generally not well organized and, in actual fact, none of the TACs had a well formulated and regularly reviewed collection development policy that would guide the development of their stock. There was no attempt, for example, to review the existing state of affairs, review relative strengths and weaknesses, consider environmental influences and other current trends, set goals and design strategies to reach those goals.

Staffing

Although the Primary Teacher Updating Programme Committee recommended that staff of TACs be increased, this study found that the recommendation had not been implemented. Every TAC is run by only one tutor, who opens the TAC only two days in a week on average and spends the rest of the days in the field visiting schools to meet and discuss teaching methods, curriculum and other educational matters with teachers. All the teachers who were interviewed underlined the need for TAC staffing to be increased so that the TAC could be open throughout the week. The practice of keeping the TACs closed during the time when the TAC tutor was away in the field was a major discouraging factor to teachers in visiting and accessing educational materials in the TACs. A typical statement which was recorded in several interviews with the teachers was as follows:

'... The TAC is rarely open since the tutor is never around whenever I visit the TAC. I think he spends all his time in the field. I have ceased to use it.'

It is the inadequate staffing leading to very irregular opening which has discouraged many teachers from visiting the resource centres. The problem of irregular opening hours was aggravated by a lack of records and publicity on what information resources are available; even those centres which have benefited from donor aid continue to be shunned by teachers, who still see TACs as unimportant channels for accessing educational materials.

TAC staffing needs to be increased and staff need to develop attributes that will make them be seen by teachers as dependable providers of useful educational materials.

TAC tutors' qualifications range from P2 to SI grade, since the posts are localized and take into account environmental knowledge. For example, a teacher with P2 certificate with a wealth of knowledge about Narok district in Maasailand may be preferred for appointment as a TAC tutor in Narok to an SI teacher with a higher academic qualification but little local knowledge of Narok district.

Teachers who are appointed TAC tutors are recommended by their District Education Officers assisted by the District Primary School Inspectors who pass the recommendation to the Chief Inspector of Schools through the Provincial Education Officers, who must also be satisfied that the persons nominated for appointment as TAC tutors are suitable candidates for appointment based on their performance as teachers. However, apart from the training one receives as a teacher, there is no additional training to make one a TAC tutor, and many teachers felt that some TAC tutors were not performing their duties effectively, because they lacked the necessary training. This is probably true since TAC tutors did not, in particular, possess good skills in collecting, organizing educational materials and disseminating information to the school population that they were appointed to serve, the sort of skills normally

acquired through training in library and information studies rather than in teacher training.

Moreover, the level of information consciousness was not high enough among the TAC tutors who were interviewed. Information consciousness refers to the value that the TAC tutors placed on information as a resource. Their low level of information consciousness was best exemplified by their lukewarm support and encouragement for the exploitation of information resources by teachers from the collection that they had in their TACs. The low level of information consciousness among the TAC tutors was manifested in a rich diversity of ways: the practice of keeping educational materials locked up in cabinets; the complete lack of information retrieval tools; the habit of keeping the TACs closed several days in a week; and the failure to make any attempt to assess the information needs of the school population that they were meant to serve. There was, however, some variation among individual TAC tutors with regard to level of information consciousness.

Physical facilities

Physical facilities were generally poor in all the TACs. The limited educational materials were housed in small rooms, some of which also served as offices of zonal inspectors of schools. Some centres were originally classrooms, which had been converted into Teachers Advisory Centres.

Since most teachers used the TACs very rarely, not many of them saw the poor physical facilities as a major problem. They did not seem to bother or complain about the few old and dusty reading tables and chairs commonly found in many TACs. Whenever the teachers visited TACs, they appeared to be preoccupied with identifying the needed items and had no time to think about the poor state of the physical facilities.

None of the TACs visited had proper shelving facilities. Books and other educational materials were kept in boxes or locked up in cabinets which were opened only when items were required by a user. The materials were not maintained in open access stacks, where they could be freely consulted.

Finance

Teachers Advisory Centres require both capital and recurrent expenditure. Recurrent expenditure covers salaries of the centre tutors, travelling and subsistence costs, consumables and contingencies. Capital funds are used for the purchase of equipment, furniture and resource materials like books.

TACs, as providers of educational materials, are actually not sustainable at the moment.

They arc dependent on such donations as are given. Their decline has been most acute over the last decade.

For the past ten years the Kenyan economy has been declining and inflation combined with recession has produced higher prices for educational materials in general and books in particular. This has caused severe problems for the country's educational resource centres, including libraries, which are squeezed from two directions: their sources of revenue have been drying up while costs of reading materials have continued to increase. Acquisition budgets have been particularly severely affected and most of the TACs do not get any funds from the government for the purchase of educational materials.

Several TAC tutors reported that they had not received any funds for purchasing any educational materials for the last five to six years. The only form of funding that they have received has been in the form of their monthly salaries. The only TACs which have received reading materials in the recent past are those which have benefited from DFID donations.

Use

Data analysis revealed that 75% of the teachers interviewed had visited their zonal or district TAC at least once, but that 40% of this group of teachers who had visited TACs had ceased to use them.

Four major reasons were identified for visits to TACs by the teachers who participated in this study. These were:

- attend seminars or workshops organized by the TAC tutor to receive updates in teaching methods;
- represent their schools on zonal examination panels in their respective subjects especially for purposes of examination moderation;
- participate in the preparation of teaching aids in their subject areas;
- access educational materials in their respective subjects.

It was interesting to note that although the provision of access to educational materials to the school population was one of the main functions of TACs, only 20% of the teachers who were interviewed cited access to educational materials as the main reason for visiting TACs.

TACs hardly gave out any materials on loan to their user communities. The inadequate materials stocked were restricted to reference use.

This study found that, although the provision of access to education materials and information services were central to the mission of TACs, they had shifted away from this mission and were more involved in examination matters at the expense of information services. It was therefore not surprising to find that none of the TACs studied offered any education programme to their users in the use of informational materials in education.

This researcher found out that many teachers used the main public library in Eldoret to access a wide variety of reading materials. Many respondents reported that since their zonal TAC had very little or nothing to offer in terms of supplementary reading material, they saw the public library as the only source of educational materials not available in their own schools. Teachers in private schools reported that they turned to their school library for supplementary reading materials. These teachers hardly visited TACs since they were convinced that their own school library was far better stocked than TACs in terms of educational materials. Whereas teachers in government schools, most of which did not have school libraries, relied on the public library for educational materials, those in private schools relied on their own school libraries. It was clear that Teachers Advisory Centres were not important sources of supplementary educational materials to the school population.

Evaluation

Costs and cost-effectiveness

Good information should be cost effective, that is, the value of the information should be more than the cost of acquiring it. Cost is therefore an important consideration in the provision of information services. However, it is important to bear in mind that information services are not easily tangible or measurable and it is difficult to express them in monetary terms.

It is, nevertheless, important to understand the structure of the costs that are related to the provision of information products or services. This structure comprise the following elements:

- direct costs (materials equipment, consumables, salaries);
- indirect costs (overheads/training, management/supervision, building costs, central charges).

These costs may be:

- fixed costs (do not change with volume of use);
- variable costs (dependent on number of activities undertaken or vary according to usage).

If the above cost elements are known, it is possible to work out the total costs of an information service by applying a standard costing formula:

Total Costs = Direct Costs + Indirect Costs

It is regrettable that in this study it was not possible to work out meaningful direct and indirect costs, since most of the Teachers Advisory Centres studied had not received any information resources in the last six years. Most actually were dormant and stocked with a few old and outdated books acquired about a whole decade back. It was difficult for this researcher to conduct any useful costing of the services of the TACs in their current state since apart from staff salaries the other cost elements could not be ascertained. That said, the costs of providing reading materials would be low, as only part of the time of the TAC tutor was utilized, existing buildings provided the premises and materials were received on donation rather than purchased.

Yet, however low the costs, cost-effectiveness was even lower. As revealed in this study, teachers who used Teachers Advisory Centres were dissatisfied with the services offered by the centres, especially with regard to the provision of educational materials. The dissatisfaction trait was indeed discerned on a wide scale in the data collected in all the interviews with the teachers. The existing collections of educational materials in the centres seem to be inappropriate and incapable of meeting the needs of teachers because they are not only inadequate and dated but are also inaccessible due to long distances from schools and frequent closures of the centres whenever TAC tutors go out to the field to visit teachers at their work stations.

Effectiveness

This study has established that, despite all the good intentions that the Kenya government had when they established Teachers Advisory Centres, the latter have turned out to be completely ineffective in providing accessibility to current and useful educational materials to the school population. The only supplementary reading materials that have been acquired have come as donations mainly from DFID but these are barely adequate. Other materials commonly found in TACs include a few charts, maps and syllabuses which are already stocked by most schools.

TACs have suffered several years of neglect and have been in steady decline over the

last decade to the extent that they have become marginalized. Moreover, remoteness seems to isolate most teachers (potential users) from their zonal resource centres, especially since the poor public transport and communications system makes it difficult for many teachers to visit the resource centres to use educational materials. It was clear from the data collected in the study that long distances coupled with poor public transport facilities discouraged many teachers from visiting the centres. Schools do not have their own buses and neither do they have funds to transport teachers to the resource centres. Moreover, those teachers, who made their own effort and used their own means of transport to get to the resource centres, were on many occasions disappointed to find the TACs either closed with the TAC tutor out in the field, or open but without the needed educational materials.

Impact

Dissatisfaction with the services of the resource centres, essentially stemming from a combination of poorly managed services, long distances from their work stations (schools), poor public transport system and a lack of suitable supplementary educational materials, made all teachers who were interviewed in this study to report that the TACs had made very little or no impact on the education process among their pupils. None of the teachers believed that the establishment of a TAC in their zone had had any bearing on examination pass rates, drop-out and repetition rates or improved pupil learning, as evidenced by better reading skills or better critical abilities. Some of the teachers asserted that it would make no difference in their pupils' education process if their local TAC was closed down since it was serving no useful purpose especially with regard to the provision of educational materials.

Conclusion

Teachers Advisory Centres, as resource centres, were meant to provide accessibility to educational materials; but this role has been neglected in Kenya. It is most unfortunate that the importance of the centres as sources of a wide variety of reading materials has been overlooked for quite some time and, regrettably, there are no signs of any changes in the current state of affairs at the moment or in the near future. The centres have therefore been of little benefit to the school population and have been ineffective in serving them.

Such centres have been ineffective in pursuance of their main functions in accordance with their mission and have resorted to performing peripheral functions such as co-ordinating zonal examinations.

Future of TACs

An evaluation of the numerous physical, psychological and other barriers to the use of Teachers Advisory Centres that have prevented them from providing effective information services to the school population shows that many of the constraints cannot be easily alleviated or avoided.

There is a need, for example, to develop the transport and communications and the information infrastructure for improved access to information and for the availability of information at the right time and in an appropriate form. It is also clear from the findings of this study that Learning Resource Centre staff, commonly referred to as TAC tutors, require extensive training in communication and interpersonal skills, collection development, organization of resources and information dissémination in order to play an effective role in serving the school population. TAC tutors need to set standards of performance for themselves and to create an atmosphere of cordiality to motivate teachers to use their centres. Good human relations between TAC tutors and teachers is a prerequisite for good user/staff relations.

Another important consideration for TAC tutors must be the evaluation of their collections and services and their relevance to the needs of the school population. This implies that needs must first be known and understood before they can be met. However, many past studies have recognized the fact that ascertaining information needs is not a simple matter. To be able to design appropriate information systems for the school population, TAC staff need to conduct qualitative user studies research aimed at gathering information on the knowledge and skills required to improve the communication process among the various members of the school population.

For TACs to provide a more effective service, staff must be prepared at all times to offer user-centred and user-friendly service to the school population. They should be concerned with 'customer care' and should give adequate publicity to the facilities and services offered by the centre, since resources and services which are not known will not be used. TAC tutors should use modem marketing strategies in putting their message across to the school population.

In view of the prevailing economic hardships in the country it is highly unlikely that the above measures will be taken now or in the near future to salvage the deterioration of the provision of information resources by TACs to the school population. Future prospects offer little comfort; indeed, present projections suggest that the part played by TACs in providing educational materials to the school population in the country will be further undermined.

Future strategies on school level information provision

This study was conducted in one district but the picture is more or less the same all over

the country. It is clear that teachers resource centres or learning resource centres have not proved to be either cost-effective or effective in providing educational materials to the school population in Kenya.

There is, therefore, a need to devise new strategies on school level information provision. This author believes that providing teachers with relevant resources in their own school libraries is likely to make the resources more accessible and this will lead to greater use of the resources, improve lesson presentation and contribute to a better pass rate of pupils. Moreover, school library resources accessed and used by pupils themselves will promote independent learning and inculcate a reading habit in the pupils. Pupils will be enabled to gain knowledge of the sources of information and develop the skills needed to retrieve and use information. Teachers Advisory Centres should continue to play the role of arranging and offering in-service training to teachers especially in modem teaching methods but should leave information provision role to a more effective modality.

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Chapter seven - Conclusions

Teacher involvement/training
Support and monitoring
Book accessibility and availability
Costs and cost-effectiveness
Role of NGOs
Sustainability
Implications

Diana Rosenberg

The case studies highlight various issues which contribute to the effectiveness (or otherwise) of ways of providing access to supplementary education materials to the school population in Africa.

Teacher involvement/training

Of primary importance, whatever the modality, is that teachers themselves have had some sort of training in teaching with books and are heavily to committed to the need for the provision of supplementary reading materials. Too often in Africa the professional training of teachers has not stressed the importance of reading or equipped them to involve pupils in the learning process. The prevailing scholastic method depends on 'chalk and talk' and gives little encouragement to the development of free personal enquiry. The role of the teacher in a book-based approach cannot be over-estimated. Ideally they should be actively involved in the selection of materials, Unless teachers themselves are used to having and using books, they are unlikely to pass these skills on to their pupils. And then, however good the materials and the system that provides them might be, they are not used.

In Mali it was noted that, at the secondary level, neither teachers nor pupils had been trained in information skills. The training courses provided to those running the libraries were short and limited to organizational techniques.

In South Africa, the most successful READ schools were those with enthusiastic, motivated and committed teachers; those interviewed were unanimous that the teachers' role and attitude to the classroom library were crucial for maximizing access. Each teacher's creativity and ability to manipulate materials to suit each subject was critical to their use. Where classroom libraries were not used, this was often because teachers had reservations about departing from the traditional, more prescriptive methods of teaching and were reluctant to make use of books.

It was concluded in Mozambique that teachers' own fear of books meant that they did little to encourage their use. They were also frightened that books which were used would be lost and therefore loans were restricted. In both projects, training of teachers in the use of book box libraries was considered insufficient. In the MINED project, trainers did not pass on what they had learnt or circulate the guide on the use of book box libraries; indirect training did not work. An intermediate evaluation of the CODE project felt that objectives had not been reached because of the poor ability of primary school teachers to teach the early stages of reading. Success in introducing supplementary reading materials was linked to training primary school teachers in how to develop a better reading environment in their schools and communities. A new project component was therefore introduced aimed at improving the teaching of reading. As a result teachers began to be trained in the use of book box libraries to develop the oral tradition and the ability to tell stories in Portuguese and in methods of teaching reading and writing.

Although the TAC programme acknowledged the importance of training teachers, who would be able to develop their pupils' reading abilities and to encourage independent learning and acquisition of good information skills, the TAC tutors were provided with no additional training and the researcher found that on the whole they lacked an information consciousness, resulting in the locking away of materials and the failure to assess the information needs of users.

The READ programme gives as much emphasis on training as it does on the provision of materials; and this contributes greatly to the effectiveness of the classroom library modality. Courses are provided at leadership, primary and high school levels, with as many follow-up sessions and workshops at the district level as are required. They concentrate on moving teachers from rote learning to the child-centred approach and on the development of professional skills, like those of language. The approach is resource-based and there are also courses in materials development, encouraging teachers to write new materials together with their pupils.

In none of the case studies were teachers much involved in the selection of materials, which is a way of increasing involvement and participation. Those interviewed in South Africa would have liked more direct consultation, rather than through the leader-teachers. They felt their experiences would be valuable to the process. In Kenya, the

subject panels charged with the task of selection had long fallen into disuse and anyway there was no budget. Secondary schools in Mali also relied on donations, so selection was not applicable.

Support and monitoring

Also crucial to effectiveness is the support received at Ministry, school and modality level.

Education is a government responsibility and, whatever the modality of information provision, it must have both the endorsement and the active support of government, especially that of the Ministry of Education or its equivalent. The major failure of the school library services in Ghana and Tanzania was that they failed to convince educational planners and administrators that school libraries were a necessity and not a luxury. In Ghana, official interest was said throughout to be cool and casual rather than active and sustained. The fact that the services emanated from the public library system was a weakness, despite the professional competency it promised. Momentum had to come from the Ministry of Education and therefore any SLS also had to be located there. In Kenya, there has never been any official policy towards school libraries, which has resulted in piecemeal development.

National school curricula also need to be resource-based, if educational materials provided are to be used effectively. In South Africa where the proposed new curriculum is outcomes-based, there is a new attitude towards the provision of learning resources. Where once the entire education system was characterized by a lack of understanding of the relevance of learning resources, now educators need to be familiar with such resources and how they can be used and learners need to acquire the skills to source, access and manipulate information. Those interviewed during the research reported that the Department of Education officials were totally supportive of classroom libraries and READ programmes. In fact the DoE wants READ's work to expand and an official report recommended that it service all nine provinces of South Africa.

One way of giving official recognition to library and book provision would be to certify courses taken by teachers. This was raised in South Africa. Those interviewed suggested that certification could be awarded after a number of training sessions, a certification that would be recognized by education authorities and rewarded. It would become a part of career progression. This would be an incentive for all teachers to become involved and would result in more teachers being motivated to give READ programmes the seriousness and attention they deserve.

At the school level, principals and heads need to be committed to the provision modality. Without this, teachers are not encouraged to use the materials, attend

workshops, etc. In Mozambique, it was found that, without this support, school timetables did not have provision for library periods. In Kenya, school transport was not made available for teachers to visit TACs nor school subscriptions paid. In Mali the numbers of staff needed to run the library were not provided. A centralized school library service was of no use at all, if the schools themselves did not first establish libraries.

The case study from South Africa provides the most convincing evidence in this respect. Lack of support from school principals was identified as one of the biggest problems. Not only were teachers not encouraged to attend training workshops, but sometimes their classes had to be cancelled and they had to meet their own costs (which could be considerable for those in rural schools.) In addition, it caused a lack of continuity both between classes and between schools. One teacher's diligence could be nullified by the next class. What was needed here was a whole-school monitoring policy, to ensure the effective use of class libraries throughout the school. And such a policy could only emanate from the principal. READ has acknowledged this problem and has begun courses in school governance.

Teachers also need on-going support from the modality itself. They have to feel that their work is being given due recognition, their needs are being addressed and their day to day problems solved. This is the sort of support that a school library service gives, when it is run efficiently. Those interviewed in South Africa congratulated READ in this respect. A back-up of a network of leader-teachers and library advisers is available in each district. Teachers emphasized that this support was only 'a telephone call away'. The team spirit nurtured by READ also means that support is readily available from colleagues. The good interpersonal relations between READ library advisers and teachers was stressed, as well as the flexibility of the programme. Changes were made on request (for instance in the number of books per library) and workshops arranged whenever needed. Mutual respect and appreciation was the order of the day. Evaluation was in-built in the programme.

This type of on-going support was not always available in the other modalities. In Mali, school librarians worked very much in isolation and library users, both teachers and pupils, were critical of their abilities in managing information. It was the view of the researcher that TAC tutors in Kenya would need extensive training if they were to be able to create that atmosphere of cordiality and customer care needed to motivate teachers to use centres. They would have to be able to evaluate their collections and their relevance to the needs of the school population. For two of the book box systems established in Mozambique, the aim was to circulate the boxes and thus increase the numbers and variety of materials available. But the 'mobile' libraries project concluded that there was not much understanding about receiving and despatching boxes, whilst that organized by 'Action Nord Sud' decided that the human resources available (coupled with the lack of transport) would necessitate that the libraries became static in

the future.

Book accessibility and availability

If books are to be integrated with learning, then it stands to reason that close proximity and constant access to books is likely to have the best results. If books are at hand then pupils will be able to read whenever they have a free moment and teachers will be able to pick up a book to illustrate a point. Books will 'saturate' the learning process. On the spot accessibility promotes greater use of resources, independent learning and the reading habit. In this respect the classroom library provides the best accessibility. It is open for both teacher and pupil use at every hour of the school day. Since it is located in the classroom it is near at hand and children can make use of books for many lessons during the school week. Queries raised and problems posed may be dealt with by teacher and pupil acting together at the time the need arises. Books are not hidden away in a locked cupboard or in a separate room, but can be there in the classroom on desks, tables and display racks.

And this is what happens on the whole in the READ classroom libraries. Apart from one school, which only allowed pupils to access the classroom library once a week, there were no restrictions. Teachers had concluded that free access was rewarding to the child. Home loans were allowed, except for Grades 1 and 2. Those interviewed thought that learners were satisfied with the amount of time they were allowed with books. They found it easy to be flexible and respond to individual needs in terms of time. Books could be exchanged or kept longer according to need.

In the other modalities examined, access proved to be a source of complaint. The secondary school libraries of Mali were only open during class hours - when pupils were in class; the hours also tended to be irregular. At one school over 60% of those questioned complained about the times of opening. Home loans were generally restricted to teachers. In Mozambique, the teacher in charge of the book box also taught, so the books were locked away from those not in his/her class most of the time. Transfers of teachers to other schools also caused problems, because the person who knew what to do was no longer at the school. Data on the usage of the CODE libraries shows this to be low: visits to the library per pupil over a year ranged from 0.33 to 1.4, with home loans over a year ranging from 0.9 to 1.3 per pupil. It could be the result of poor accessibility. This problem is likely to occur in the libraries being set up in Mali at the basic level. Access to TAC collections was even more problematic. The books were not available in the school but necessitated a journey by the teacher sometimes of 10 km or more. And the hours the TAC was open were very irregular and usually not more than two days per week. Information on what materials were available was not circulated. Even if a teacher found the TAC open, loaning material was not allowed. Only 20% of teachers interviewed had visited their TAC to source educational

materials.

Also important is that the numbers of books available are sufficient for the numbers of teachers and pupils served and that the books are relevant to what is taught and up to date.

It is frequently argued that only the school library, because of its potential size, can meet these criteria, especially when it is run by a professionally trained librarian and backed by a school library service, which can provide supplementary material for special projects. And one of the secondary school libraries in Mali did provide the best ratio of books per pupil, nearly 5. However teachers and pupils were still dissatisfied and 80% claimed that readers' information needs could only be met by increasing and improving the collection; in particular journal subscriptions were required.

The numbers of books provided through the book box libraries (around 0.1 per pupil in the MINED project and 1.5 in that of CODE) were definitely insufficient. Interested pupils and quick readers had to wait. The same is likely to be true for basic level school libraries in Mali, which will offer 0.85 books per pupil. The books in all these projects have been selected by experts, so relevance is high. The MINED project offered three different book boxes, by level and according to whether a school was urban or rural. But in Mozambique there were still some complaints that not all the books provided were appropriate. The most sought after were the imported 4-colour publications with good illustrations; the texts of those produced locally were often long and difficult. The TAC collections were sufficient neither in numbers nor relevance. A frequent comment of teachers interviewed was that the materials were not sufficient and were irrelevant to their needs. Not all subjects of the primary school curriculum were covered.

Only those using the classroom libraries were satisfied. Each classroom library has a minimum of 60 books (around 1.7 per pupil) but the number can be increased and those interviewed usually managed libraries of around 120 books. Fast readers are catered for by borrowing from a library serving the next higher class in the school. Each library is carefully selected and graded, so that it meets the demands of the curriculum. READ also develops and publishes its own books - story books, picture story packs to encourage making up stories and theme packs over the curriculum - to ensure that libraries meet specific South African needs. The responsiveness of the selection policy to expressed needs, is evidenced by the way READ now includes fiction with mixed settings, rather than restricting stories to those with black African backgrounds.

Classroom libraries and book box libraries have been said to be restrictive and to act as a barrier to pupils moving on to the use of larger collections and to exploring other sources of information. The findings of the South African case study negates this argument. Whilst the teachers agreed that the classroom library was not sufficient for

teaching all library skills to both pupils and teachers, it provides a stepping stone to larger collections. Some of the teachers take their pupils to public libraries in town and block borrow materials to enrich their classroom collections. In one school, some of the classroom libraries had been collapsed to form a central school library, which ran alongside the individual classroom libraries.

Costs and cost-effectiveness

It has already been indicated that data on costs was not easy to find. Some comparisons are possible:

- in Mali, the libraries being provided to basic level schools cost in the region of US$3,000 each, i.e. about US$10 per pupil. This figure includes the purchase cost of the books (just over 50%); the rest is spent in training librarians and creating, equipping and operating the management structure in the Ministry. It does not include the cost of the library premises or the staff. The first library to open cost in the region of US$2,000 to build and equip; costs per pupil could therefore be in the region of US$17;

- the cost of one READ classroom library has been estimated at US$313.50 and the cost per school at US$4,702.50. This works out around US$9 per pupil. This figure does not include any administrative or training costs. In other modalities examined these usually work out at around 50% of the total cost. Therefore in South Africa, the cost per pupil is likely to be in the region of US$18.

  A big advantage of the classroom library is that it does not require any special premises or equipment (the existing classroom is its home). In addition it does not require the post of a professional teacher-librarian. The existing class teacher acts in this role. For South Africa, this is important. Expenditure cutbacks have targeted school libraries and have caused the withdrawal of full-time qualified teacher-librarians. The latter are no longer included in teacher/pupil ratios and schools need to raise extra funds, if they are to be employed.

- the book box libraries of Mozambique cost between US$0.12 (at the initial level of the MINED project) and US$2.75 (in the CODE project) per pupil. This was for the whole service, including the cost of books, training and administration. The number of books per box was small and no sort of organization was necessary. The boxes could be used anywhere

and needed no physical facilities at all. In the rural areas, this was especially important as many school operated under trees. The box could be used there during the day and returned to a teachers' home at night;

- costs of the TAC collections were not available. But these were likely to be low. Existing buildings were used as premises, looking after the collection was only a small portion of the job of a TAC tutor and materials were received on donation;

- the secondary school libraries in Mali were not costed. However it was pointed out that they could not become effective unless they were run by professional librarians, housed in purpose built or specially adapted premises and offered adequate annual budgets to purchase the books and journals required to meet user needs;

- school library services can only supplement the library that is established and maintained by the school. Those examined appeared to have become an expensive and not very effective additional layer of bureaucracy.

There is no direct relation between costs and cost-effectiveness; the most expensive are not necessarily the most effective, nor the cheapest the least effective. TACs may be a low cost alternative, but they have made little impact. Their materials are inadequate and dated; because of distance from users, poor transport and irregular opening hours, access is difficult. Most teachers interviewed claimed that if a TAC closed down, it would make no difference at all to the education process. The school library services in Ghana and Tanzania proved to be expensive. Although it is acknowledged that they raised awareness about the need for school libraries, these libraries still do not exist on the ground.

School libraries themselves seem not to be a viable option because of cost. The policy in South Africa is that every educational institution should have its own library. But as only 17% of schools at present have libraries, that means that 22,550 schools need to have libraries built, equipped and maintained. Mali has chosen the road of setting up a library in each of the basic schools. However there are almost 2,000 of these schools and only ten were included in the first phase, with 20 planned in the second. And it is likely that these libraries will suffer problems in the availability and accessibility of materials.

Book boxes are a very economic way of providing books. They are especially effective where schools have no infrastructure and no access to other sources of information. But without sufficient training of teachers in promoting the taste for and habit of reading,

the educational benefits are not satisfactory. The number of books available and their accessibility to readers is also limited.

Of the modalities examined, the classroom library seems the most effective in relation to costs. Pupils show confidence in reading and improved materials selection, analytical and critical thinking skills. Language proficiency can be increased by up to two years.

Role of NGOs

One issue arising from the case studies is the increasingly important role NGOs are playing in book provision at the school level. This role is not merely restricted to initiating and financing projects;

NGOs are also involved in day to day management. In South Africa, READ not only manages the purchase and distribution of classroom libraries, but has an extensive programme of training courses, organizes festivals, etc. to promote reading and publishes books relevant to South African needs. In Mozambique, whilst CODE, a Canadian NGO, provided the finance for the 'portable' libraries project, Progresso, a local NGO, was contracted to act as co-ordinator and manager.

The advantages of using NGOs are considerable. They can raise funds from all kinds of sources, ones that are perhaps not easily tapped by government. For example, READ relies very much on the private sector in South Africa for funding. Kenya, where school provision is the sole responsibility of government, this source has not been tapped, although two-thirds of the GDP is accounted for by private enterprise. And funders often find them more directly accountable than large government ministries. READ has managed to maintain its same funders over many years. NGOs are also more flexible in the ways they can operate. They can support local initiatives, as in Mozambique, rather than concentrate on the whole country situation. Decision-making is speedy. They adjust their staffing levels and expertise to the jobs in hand. There is no danger of staffing levels being maintained when the work or the finance for the work has disappeared, as has happened in the school library services of Ghana and Tanzania.

However there is the danger that national Ministries or Departments of Education may be tempted to abrogate their responsibilities towards school level provision. Their support and overall control and co-ordination is still required.

The researcher in Mozambique has pointed out that whilst there is a school libraries section in the Ministry, this has no policy and is without financial and human resources to function properly. The lack of a strong co-ordinating agency means that there has been a poor exchange of information between the various 'library' projects operating in

the country. Previous experiences are not therefore used as a basis to move forward.

The government in South Africa is anxious that READ continue its programmes and expand them, into new districts and into high schools. But READ operates under financial constraints. It needs some financial support from the DoE to undertake new assignments. Teachers, who wanted to replenish their libraries in the middle of the school year, also thought that DoE could provide some financial support for this purpose. Financial support, rather than words, in the form of actual annual budgets was also required by TACs and secondary school libraries in Mali.

The introduction of curricula favouring book-based learning must also be the responsibility of government, as is recognition of courses related to the use of libraries, such as those run by READ.

Sustainability

All of the modalities examined are donor-dependent to a certain extent. None are self-sustaining or envisage self-sufficiency as an option. Only the MINED book box project in Mozambique was funded by the national budget and this took place in the early 80s. The school library services are still funded nationally, but that funding is mostly restricted to staff salaries and the books distributed are normally donations. The libraries purchased for the basic schools in Mali are paid for by the French government, those at the secondary level rely on donations to augment their collections. READ in South Africa raises all its funds, albeit mostly locally and from the private sector. The 'portable' library project in Mozambique was completely funded by CODE. TACs in Kenya have not received acquisitions budgets from the Ministry for the last five to six years; the material they have came on donation, most recently from DFID.

One way of moving towards sustainability is to look to the community for support. Those interviewed in Tanzania considered that the demand for school provision must come from below and then it might be possible to expect parental contributions towards the purchase of books or parental support in the organization of such events as charity walks. Parental involvement is a part of READ's philosophy, but the case study revealed that it was not working too well especially at the rural level. And no evidence was provided to indicate that this support had taken the form of income generation. Only in Mali, at the level of basic provision, had the community been involved in cost-sharing from the start. There the local population must provide appropriate premises, furniture and shelves. It seems that people have been keen to make this commitment. However to maintain the programme, further donor support is being sought.

Another way of ensuring sustainability, again suggested in Tanzania, was to actively promote cooperation with other libraries. No one form of information provision should

try to be self-sufficient, but rather the total resources of the country should be made available to everyone according to need. This certainly seems to be happening to good effect in South Africa, where teachers introduce their pupils to the collections of the bigger public libraries in town.

Sometimes the existing infrastructure of a country must determine sustainability. In Mozambique, lack of transport and poor roads meant that circulating book box libraries were a non-starter. Transport and communication problems also impaired access to TACs by teachers in the surrounding areas.

Another factor affecting sustainability is the insufficient nature of locally published reading material. It was strongly felt (for example in Ghana and Kenya) that until there was a viable local publishing industry producing relevant material, in sufficient quantities and at realistic prices, then provision of supplementary materials to the school population would always be disadvantaged. However evidence from the case studies suggests that once modalities are in place, then publishing at the local level is encouraged, as the market is there. In Mali 18.4% of the books going to basic schools are published in Mali. In Mozambique, the CODE project by the fourth and fifth year had moved towards almost total acquisition of books produced locally. READ commissions and publishes locally a good proportion of its books.

Implications

From the evidence provided by the case studies, the conclusion reached is that classroom libraries as organized by READ provide the most effective modality. The chief features leading to that success are:

- adequate teacher involvement and training;
- on-going support;
- accessibility, sufficiency and relevance of books;
- moderate costs, with little demand on staff or premises.

However any modality offering the same characteristics could be equally effective. And it must be recognized that most African countries do not have the infrastructure, human resources and other facilities offered by South Africa.

More research is required, if this conclusion is to be anything but tentative. In the first place, this report does not include a case study of a modality which is becoming increasingly popular in Africa: that of the community resource centre, also known as the learning and education centre, etc. Here school pupils share resources and premises with other learners in the community, including adults. Its effectiveness needs to be

analyzed. Other modalities also exist both in Africa and elsewhere.

In the second place, analysis of costs and cost effectiveness requires a more rigorous approach than is found in this report. Data on costs is difficult to find in existing reports and records, therefore more original and in-depth research is required. It would be interesting to compare the costs of well-run and effective services.

In the third place, there is a necessity to look at the same modalities as they operate in different countries and in different conditions. For example classroom libraries exist in many countries in Africa, but do not appear to have the positive impact of those operating in South Africa. Why is this? What underlying factors lead to their success? An examination of school level provision in one country, including all the various modalities and how they interlock, would also provide illuminating data.

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Appendix data collection instruments

1. School library services: Ghana and Tanzania
2. Classroom libraries: South Africa
3. Teachers Advisory Centres: Kenya

1. School library services: Ghana and Tanzania

INTERVIEW FRAMEWORK

The aim is to collect data concerning the development and current and future activities of the Schools and Colleges Department (SCD) of Ghana Library Board (GLB)/School Library Service (SLS) of Tanzania Library Services (TLS).

Section A. and B. may be answered through consultation of annual reports and other records.

Section C. will require interviews with officers of the GLB/TLS and teachers in schools/lecturers in education/ministry officials.

A. DEVELOPMENT

1. Staffing

Give the numbers of professional, para-professional and non-professional staff working in SCD/SLS for the following three years:

1975
1985
1995

2. Expenditure

(a) Give the actual expenditure of SCD/SLS in cedis/shillings and equivalent US$ (at the rate of exchange for the year in question) for the following three years:

1975
1985
1995

(b) Give the % of total GLB/TLS recurrent expenditure that was spent on SCD/SLS for the following three years:

1975
1985
1995

B. RECENT ACTIVITIES

3. Give the number of the following that have been undertaken or produced by SCD/SLS since 1990:

(a) advisory visits to schools
(b) visits by school mobile library
(c) lists of recommended books
(d) training courses for school librarians
(e) books/journals purchased and distributed to schools
(f) donated books/journals distributed to schools
(g) manuals on library procedures compiled (h) standards
(i) other

C. PERFORMANCE

4. School Library Service

(a) In your opinion, have the activities of SCD/SLS assisted in the development of school libraries in Ghana/Tanzania? Give reasons and examples.

(b) In what ways could the performance of SCD/SLS be improved? Give examples.

(c) Are there any plans to alter the role and/or activities of SCD/SLS or to replace it with something else in the near future? How?

5. School libraries

(a) What is your opinion of the current state of school libraries in Ghana/Tanzania? Give reasons and examples.

(b) Do you consider that a school library is essential to the education process? Give reasons.

(c) How can the availability of reading materials in schools best be improved? What should be given priority at the moment?

2. Classroom libraries: South Africa

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SECTION 1 - PROVISION/AVAILABILITY

Sufficiency of the collection

1. Is the size of the classroom library (the number of items) sufficient, bearing in mind the number of pupils in your class?

2. Is there a mechanism for replenishing your library to address the pupil/book ratio if necessary? If 'yes' what is the procedure for replenishing your collection?

Accessibility

3. How many times can a pupil access your library in one day or during a lesson? Are learners satisfied with the number of times?

4. How many items are issued out per learner and for how long can they be kept? Are learners satisfied with the length of time?

SECTION 2 - RELEVANCE

5. Are teachers involved in materials selection for their classroom

libraries? If not who is involved?

6. Does the material in your library support the curriculum? If yes, how and if not, where are shortfalls/weaknesses in the library collection?

7. From your observation, are learners satisfied with the type of materials included in the library? If not, where are the shortfalls and which materials are not popular?

8. Do you sometimes feel the need to access other types of libraries and if so, do you access them and for what?

9. If yes to 8 above, which libraries do you access?

Any suggestions?

SECTION 3 - STAFF TRAINING

10. Who offers original training for teachers and are there any problems related to training?

11. Are there any in-service training or follow-up workshops for sustainability? If so, how often are these sessions?

12. During training are you made fully aware of the objectives of classroom libraries, and are you able to relate those objectives to those of education generally?

Any suggestions?

SECTION 4 - IMPACT

13. How long does it take learners after initiation to the library, to *access* it independently?

14. How long does it take learners to *select reference materials* and *materials for projects* independently?

15. How long do learners take to select *fiction* independently?

16. How long does it take learners to display *preferences* in relation to

fiction genre, context and content?

17. How long does it take learners to start displaying a reading habit by engaging themselves with reading when not formally occupied, without the teacher's instruction?

18. How long does it take, after the initial introduction to the library, for learners to:

- display logical and critical thinking skills?
- to decipher differing viewpoints on a topic?
- to criticize or challenge other viewpoints after first initiation to the library?
- to formulate their own arguments and viewpoints and to draw their own conclusions?

19. Do you sometimes need assistance and support from READ in using your library? If yes, is that assistance easily available?

20. Do you get support from the education department for your involvement with READ, specifically the running of classroom libraries?

21. Do parents become involved in their children's reading and, if so, how? If not where is the problem?

3. Teachers Advisory Centres: Kenya

A. TEACHER INTERVIEW

Background information

1. Name and address of school.
2. Name of interviewee.
3. Academic and professional qualifications.
4. How long have you taught in your present school?
5. What subjects do you teach?

User satisfaction questions

1. Do you ever use a Teachers Advisory Centre (TAC)?

2. If so, how often do you use the TAC and why?

3. If you do not use a TAC or have ceased to use it, why?

4. Do you arrange for your pupils to visit and use a TAC?

5. If so, how often do your pupils visit and use a TAC and why?

6. Does your school management, for example, the headmaster encourage and support the use of your nearest TAC by teachers and pupils?

7. Are the numbers of information materials available in the TAC that you use sufficient? Would you prefer more?

8. What type of materials do you prefer in terms of subject coverage?

9. Is the level of information materials available in accordance with your needs?

10. Are you involved in the selection of materials stocked in the TAC? If not, would you like to see any changes made?

11. Are you able to use the information materials in the TAC whenever you require to do so? If not, what changes would you like?

12. Are you provided with all the information services that you need (e.g. reference, loan, study space, enquiries, advice)? If not, what other services do you require?

13. Have you received any training in the use of materials available in the TAC in teaching?

14. Do you also use another type of library? If so, what is lacking in your TAC that makes you go searching for an alternative source(s)?

15. If you had the choice, what type of service would you prefer for obtaining the books you need to support your teaching?

Impact questions

1. How do you rate your pupils' performance in the Kenya Certificate of

Primary Education Examinations?

2. How was the pupils' performance in the KCPE before the TAC was introduced in this zone?

3. Do you think that the TAC has resulted in or contributed to improvement of the examination pass rate in this school? Why?

4. Do you think that the abilities of pupils have changed with the introduction and use of the TAC? In what way?

5. Do you think that there has been any reduction in school drop out rate or class repetitions since the introduction and use of the TAC by teachers and pupils?

6. Do you feel that the benefits to your pupils exceed the cost of providing materials and services in the Teachers Advisory Centre?

B. ZONAL TAC TUTOR INTERVIEW

1. Name of Zone.

2. Name of interviewee.

3. Qualifications and designation.

4. Period of service with the TAC.

5. Date the TAC was established.

6. Opening hours of the TAC.

7. What is the number of persons who use the TAC in a year?

8. What types of materials are available in the TAC?

9. How many books and other information items are available in the TAC?

10. What is the range of subjects covered? How many books in Science, English, other subjects?

11. How current are the books and other materials available in the TAC?

12. How many books or other educational materials are loaned to pupils and teachers in a month? In a year?

13. What types of services are provided to pupils and teachers?

14. What is the source of funding of the TAC?

15. What problems are encountered in the running and operation of the TAC?

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