Book Aid International *Study Hub* pilot, Zambia
In partnership with the Ministry of General Education and
Zambia Library Service

Final Evaluation Report 2017

Samantha Thomas-Chuula
**Executive Summary**

The aim of the *Study Hub* project is to provide additional support to secondary school students taking their exams. This is achieved by enhancing the capacity and provision of the provincial library through increased access to locally purchased curriculum books and donated supplementary texts for English, maths, science and other subjects. An increased number of fiction and leisure reading titles were also included in the donation to help students relax between exams.

The *Study Hub* concept was designed to enhance the provincial library’s position as a centre for learning and exam support for this age group and through a new secondary school outreach service, raise the profile of the school library through a loan system. Each library’s outreach service was to loan 200 texts to a minimum of three local secondary schools for a term, rotating books for three terms. Through further stakeholder discussions with the school Head Teachers, Zambia Ministry of General Education (MoGE), Zambia Library Service (ZLS) and Book Aid International it was decided that a donation of books to the 12 project schools would create greater impact in raising the profile of the school-library. This new and permanent asset would provide a greater support to students rather than a rotating system, which could be disruptive to their use of books during exam time. The provincial libraries would also receive a donation. Thus instead of 4 provincial library based *Study Hubs*; 16 *Study Hubs*, 12 based in school-libraries and four based in the provincial libraries were successfully launched in the pilot.

While the original *Study Hub* design sought to position the public library as a centre for learning with regular interaction with schools through the book loan outreach activity, the focus has shifted to the school libraries instead. For the students and the schools, the benefits are clear. Good books are available and more accessible through a well-functioning school library with the support of provincial librarians. At the same time, the number of students visiting provincial libraries increased also — their profile has been raised due to the provision and the support on offer. There is however no evidence that the schools or pupils see their provincial library as a key learning space in addition to the school library. This is because the school and the school librarian have provided this function. When asked, some teachers did say that they recommend students to school and public libraries. But we do not know if this is what has led to the increased numbers there.

Book Aid International produced an exam preparation guide called ‘PASS IT!’ and this was used for training teacher-librarians to run sessions for students covering such topics as time-management and timetabling, exam vocabulary and how to reduce stress during the exam period.

The timing of the project posed the greatest challenge for this intervention as by the time of hub establishment in the schools and libraries and its marketing amongst the students, many had already begun sitting their exams. Timing of shipments, processing, distribution to the *Study Hub* sites and August break meant implementation was too late for mock exams and for students already in the midst of their exams. Despite this, all *Study Hubs* were successfully established, marketed and utilised by teachers, students.

All stakeholders involved in the project were interviewed. This included both revising and non-revising students, teachers, teacher-librarians, department heads, Head Teachers and Provincial Education Officials. They praised the *Study Hub* concept. Each was able to identify changes that they believed had come about as a result of the *Study Hub*. They were able to identify Book Aid International’s role as well as other factors that made it a success such as increased co-operation.
between teachers, peer group marketing of the resource and budget allocations towards the library infrastructure. All rated the changes significant for the students, teachers and the school at large.

Findings show that the number of visits to the 16 Study Hub libraries has increased from 4,512 visits to 18,485. These visits are to utilise the materials, not to simply use the library space. We can assume that these figures include repeat student visits as well as many students visiting just once. Distinguishing between one student’s repeat visits and one-off visits has not been possible in the majority of cases, except where whole examination classes have been timetabled to attend the library. In such cases a more than 500% increase in visits has been recorded. Lastly, for the most part these figures were captured within a small period – between the establishment of the Study Hub in each site (circa September) and mid-November. On the whole, all stakeholders have seen an increase in number of student visits to use the donated supplementary books, revision guides, curriculum text books as well as donated fiction and leisure reading books.

Feedback shows that the digital literacy skills training received by the librarians been used in six sites where the schools or public libraries have computers as well as internet connectivity. In one case, the Solwezi Provincial librarian designed, developed and ran a dedicated session, introducing a free Computer Technology Training programme to children between grades 1-12. For the remaining ten sites which do not have the necessary hardware, there was a verbal commitment to use their skills when computers and connectivity becomes available at the school or local library. Since the introduction of computer science exams in 2015, all schools now have to procure computers and internet connectivity, so librarians will be able to utilise their skills in the future.

The evaluation has demonstrated how the Study Hub project is an effective intervention to help schools improve the quality of the education they deliver as part of Sustainable Development Goal 4.

The print resources and also the method of engagement with Ministry of Education along with the orientation of Head Teachers and training of librarians and teacher-librarians has led to a shift in attitudes and practices and led to better functioning libraries. The results support the MoGE strategy of reading to improve learner performance.

Teachers have been inspired and motivated to make their libraries succeed. Their new behaviours as reported by their peers and students are attributed to the training and the support received through the implementation process. They are working more purposefully, are engaging staff and students and are advocating and lobbying for more library resources, in the majority of cases successfully.

The project has demonstrated that where teachers have an opportunity to review the UK materials for content and relevance, all are embracing them to support the curriculum, especially in sciences, mathematics and English literature. This has led to an increased number of teachers accessing these materials to prepare their lessons as well as refer students to. Anecdotal evidence from Head Teachers and teachers, captured in this evaluation points to this response. This is a strong indicator that there is a desire for quality education in the schools, that the teachers and students long for quality materials and a functioning learning space. In these project sites, this desire is being met through the Study Hub.

The MoGE has identified reading as ‘a key strategy for improved learner performance’ and the Study Hub project has enabled participating schools to boost their material provision and show
the Ministry and other schools the difference a functioning library and high quality resources can make to students attitude to learning and study and teachers’ attitudes towards teaching and education standards.

The project has demonstrated that a mutually beneficial relationship can be created between the public library and the school libraries to provide students with access to good materials. In this respect this pilot can be used by schools and libraries to lobby for increased book and library infrastructure budgets. Easily replicable with support from ZLS, the local publishing industry and regular fundraising, this model can be sustainable.

While this evaluation did not seek to track individual examination takers to measure the impact of individual texts on learner performance, this evaluation assures all stakeholders that a key element in achieving improved learner performance is quality materials that are easily accessible and come with some teacher support. The Study Hub shows that this combination does places exam takers in a good position to do well when tested.

Background

Young people revising for exams in Africa often look to the library for space and silence to revise. They choose the public library also because they can gain access to important short loan or reference books and texts and local curriculum text books. The number of students using the library swells around the exam period – and these essential books become hard to access. Students looking for books around key subjects like, biology, chemistry, physics and maths struggle to find books to use as part of their revision. Librarians assisting students often do not have up-to-date research skills to help students find key materials. There is an opportunity for the library to offer more support to students through additional materials and training to run exam preparation events for students.

Description

The Study Hub is a library partner and Book Aid International-branded section of the library which is frequented by young people studying for their exams. The Study Hubs contain seating which have already provided by the partner. It is clearly sign posted as a ‘Study Hub’ with a plaque for easy sighting by students. At the secondary schools with Study Hubs in their school libraries, exam takers can easily find useful local curriculum texts and a range of donated subject materials to assist them revise. They can also find some youth fiction and leisure reading to assist them relax. Training for the librarians helps them understand young people better, develops their skills in internet research and better support teacher librarians as they set up school libraries and bolster their use. Each school receives a donation of between 300-500 UK donated subject, revision and fiction books and between 20-40 local curriculum books and 80-100 fiction books. They also receive approximately 15-20 ‘PASS IT!’ exam preparation guides.

In their training, school librarians are taught how to use the revision guides and market the books in their libraries to teachers and students. A poster in the school points students to the local library to find additional revision materials, including curriculum texts and to get support through the exams preparation sessions being run.

The training also equips participants to run the exam preparation sessions which includes topics such as time management, tips, exam vocabulary and stress reducing strategies.
Introduction

The Study Hub project was designed to provide additional support to secondary school students taking their exams, by enhancing the capacity and provision of the public library and strengthening their link with local secondary school libraries. The pilot project targeted four provincial libraries in the Choma, Kasama, Lusaka and Solwezi provinces of Zambia. Book Aid International partnered with the Zambia Library Service (ZLS), through the Ministry of General Education (MoGE).

A total of 6,600 high quality, brand new UK English language subject books and revision guides in Mathematics, Sciences and English Literature formed the core donation. Young adult fiction and leisure reading books were also included. A grant of £5,000 purchased 566 curriculum text books which were also distributed through the Study Hubs. In addition to the four provincial libraries that took part in the project, 12 schools established their own Study Hubs in their school libraries making a total of 16 Study Hubs. 11 teachers and 12 librarians participated in a three day training workshop to develop their skills in school library management, examination preparation and advanced research skills.

To achieve its overall aim to provide support to secondary school students through functioning and well equipped libraries, the project had five core objectives which formed the focus of this evaluation.

Project Objectives

i. Increase libraries’ local curriculum book and supplementary subject book collection to support students’ revision.

ii. Increase libraries’ collection of youth fiction and age appropriate leisure reading.

iii. Equip librarians with study skills & research skills to support students preparing for exams; a better understanding of teenagers and how to support young people in their search for information to develop their life skills.

iv. Equip librarians to run a secondary school exam preparation outreach service.

Through these objectives, the project sought to achieve the following outcomes, demonstrating its impact.

Key Outcomes

1. Young people taking exams access at their schools and local libraries an increased number of local curriculum books that assist them with their studies and revision.

2. Librarians understand young people and their need for information at this stage. They welcome and provide support and encouragement to young people.

3. Librarians are able to equip students with research skills and exam preparation skills.

4. Donated books include age appropriate books for leisure as well as revision texts.

5. There is an improved perception the of library service because of an increased number of books that students find useful and an atmosphere of support.
Implementation

Four provincial libraries have taken part in the project. These are Choma Provincial Library in southern province, ZLS Public Library headquarters based in the capital Lusaka, Kasama Provincial Library covering Northern Zambia and Solwezi Provincial Library covering North East Zambia. Each provincial library has engaged with three local secondary school, as follows:


Once received by ZLS, books were all stamped with a Book Aid International stamp, sorted and distributed out to the provincial libraries and schools. Further stamping by provincial and school libraries took place before arrangement on the library shelves.

Senior Librarian Elizabeth Chama was the lead project manager at ZLS and led in the collection of Baseline and Midline monitoring data from the provincial libraries. Provincial librarians facilitated the core contact between ZLS and the schools. Book Aid International’s Senior Project Manager Judith Henderson delivered the capacity building workshop following the arrival of the books between 27-29 June 2017 and Head of Programmes, Samantha Thomas-Chuula undertook the final evaluation between 19-30 November 2017.

The final evaluation involved visiting Choma, Lusaka and Solwezi provinces with ZLS and interviewing nine Head Teachers of the participating schools. Three provincial librarians, nine teacher-librarians at the schools and nine Heads of Departments or other teachers involved at the schools were also interviewed. 25 students from the nine schools and three libraries visited were interviewed individually. The evaluation received support from the Provincial Education Officer of Choma and Acting Minister of Education who both praised the outcomes of the project.

The evaluation hoped to survey a greater number of students and teachers, but the on-going exams meant teachers were taken up with adjudicating duties and students were busy with exams. We were fortunate to engage with some students who were using the new resources late in their exam preparations.
Key findings

Finding 1: The project has brought about an increase in curriculum texts and supplementary subject books – and increased usage by students

In order to support students in the preparation for exams, each school and provincial library received a number of new books according to their enrolment figures. The smallest school received 327 books and the largest received 572. ZLS provincial librarians together with the Provincial Education Office agreed on the final number of books distributed to each school. Similarly, the most sought after curriculum books, as guided by the provincial and school librarians were purchased with a grant. These text books were largely in the science subjects and were purchased centrally by ZLS from a local publisher and distributed to schools and provincial libraries. The smallest school received 25 and the largest receiving 62 text books. Appreciation for the new collections was evident in the interviews with stakeholders. All library collections benefited by at least 350 books.

Tables 1 and 2 below show the number of books distributed and received by each Study Hub site and the composition of the collections.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provincial/school library</th>
<th>Number of UK donated subject/revision books received</th>
<th>Number of UK donated fiction/leisure reading books received</th>
<th>Number of local curriculum texts purchased</th>
<th>Total number of books in new collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choma Provincial Library</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choma Day School</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Njase Girls School</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batoka Secondary School</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasama Provincial Library</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasama Girls School</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ituna Secondary School</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasama Boys School</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lusaka Provincial Library</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matero Boys School</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libala Secondary</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>552</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Acquired</th>
<th>Number of books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total fiction/leisure reading</td>
<td>UK donation</td>
<td>1589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total supplementary subject</td>
<td>UK donation</td>
<td>5011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total books for 16 Study Hubs</td>
<td>UK donation</td>
<td>6600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total books sent</td>
<td></td>
<td>7654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of books distributed to ZLS’ network</td>
<td></td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Curriculum Texts</td>
<td>Purchased locally</td>
<td>566</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most popular curriculum text books were purchased locally to feature inside the school and provincial library Study Hubs.

Providing text books for the library has led to children seeking them out to catch up on missed lessons. This has prompted Heads of Departments to relinquish texts from their stores into the library to increase access to the books by the students.

The new collections are appreciated as one teacher said. “Before they would say “Madam there are no books in the library” They don’t say this anymore.”

Mrs Changatilla teacher of English and Civics, Choma Day School.

Finding 2: There has been an increase in fiction and leisure reading among students

Like the general collection in the libraries, fiction books are old, unappealing and often not used. The picture below of Batoka Secondary in Choma (left) illustrates. New fiction seen here at the
Lusaka Central library shows the books available after the establishment of the Study Hub (below, right).

The pupils at Njase Girls School were excited about the fiction as described by their librarian. “The most enthusiasm I’ve seen from the girls – they would fight over those things…the titles are modern and they recognise the ones that have been films or on TV.” Teacher librarian Douglas Simonda, Njase Girls School.

Concern over the safety of the books means that books are requested, recorded and read on the premises and not borrowed. The number of fiction books requested by girls has increased. Batoka Secondary School reports that before the Study Hub, the average number of books requested was 7 a day. After the Study Hub, as many as 50 requests per day are received. Similarly, Solwezi Technical School reports a jump from three requests per day on average to up to 80. Choma Day School reports that pre Study Hub, only 1-2 requests per day were received compared to up to 10 requests daily.

**Finding 3: There has been an increased number of library visits and visitors since the launch of the new collection**

The impact of this modest number of new books, is substantial. In each of the three provinces, the number of students visiting their provincial and school libraries on a monthly basis, following the launch and marketing of the Study Hubs has increased exponentially at all sites visited as shown in tables 3, 4 and 5 below.

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly visits to the library by grades 9 and 12 students in Choma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before Study Hub</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choma Provincial Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choma Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Njase Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batoka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Book Aid International is a registered charity in England and Wales
Charity number 313869 and company number 880754
The significant increase in student visitor numbers and change in use, from a space to revise to a place to find and use materials for revision purposes, is substantial.

The public and school libraries are largely open, five days per week during office hours from 08:00-17:00. During the exam season some extended their hours into the evening and also opened on Saturdays. These extended hours ran before and after the Study Hub was established.

The figures include a combination of one off visits, repeat visits and class visits. Recording methods used did not distinguish between repeat visitor and one-off visitors. Anecdotal evidence from teachers suggests that a greater number of students are using the resource.

Due to fears and incidents of theft reported in three schools, students were not allowed to borrow books to take home. Other schools adopted the policy for fear that borrowing would
quickly deplete the collection. For each, the fear of losing this important collection was real and they felt that all donated books, including fiction should be read within the confines of the library. The choices of books were recorded in a register. The sentiment below explains:

“The response from the students has been overwhelming. Access was open, but books were being taken and not returned so a new system of control was introduced. A timetable of designated time has been created and computers have been purchased to expand the access.” Mr Ntindu, Headmaster, Batoka School, Choma

Matero Boys, Solwezi Technical and Batoka schools created a timetable for all grade nine and 12 students to attend the library during the evaluation period, between September and November 2017. Before the establishment of the Study Hub, classes were not brought to the library. They did not do this before the Study Hub was established, as the lack of resources did not make it a worthwhile activity.

The evaluation did not include a visit to Kasama provincial library or schools

Finding 4: Beneficiary numbers have increased

Table 6 below shows the final figure for beneficiaries using library materials recorded in the 16 Study Hub sites during the period September to November 2017 was 18,485 as shown below. It does not include the number of students reached through the exam prep sessions, nor the number of teachers using the library as these were not recorded officially, though mentioned anecdotally. It does include repeat visits, class visits and individuals’ visits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provincial libraries/schools</th>
<th>Total number of grade nine and 12 exam student revising for 2017 exams</th>
<th>Monthly number of Student visits BEFORE Study Hub</th>
<th>Monthly number of student visits AFTER Study Hub</th>
<th>Percentagge increase in visits to the library</th>
<th>Number exam preparaion sessions run</th>
<th>Number grade nine and 12 pupils attending exam preparatio n sessions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choma Provincial Library</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>119%</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choma Day School</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>265%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Njase Girls School</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>290%</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batoka Secondary School</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>275%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lusaka Provincial Library</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matero Boys School</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libala Secondary School</td>
<td>1297</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2700</td>
<td>575%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabulonga Girls School</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>157.5%</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Solwezi Provincial Library - 920 1057 15% 04 140
Rodwell Mwepu School 767 500 3280 556% 1 100
Solwezi Technical School 523 700 3000 328% 1 192
TOTAL 5077 4512 18485 - 15 735

Table 6

When asked what has changed since the arrival of the Study Hub, all stakeholders mention the increase in number of students visiting the school and provincial libraries.

Students who used to frequent the libraries report that new students are now coming to the library. Charmain below, explains.

“Before, students didn’t come. After...many students come for students to study, we need the Study Hub. “They (the books) give us more information than the teacher does in class” Charmain Faulkner, (left) grade 11, Batoka, Choma

“The perception that ‘the library is for nerds like us’ is changing...as cool kids have come and now it’s a fun learning place” Wellington, Library Prefect grade 11, Matero Boys, Lusaka

Teachers all cite the difference the Study Hub has made to library usage.

“Now I see children rushing to the library. Before they were dragging their feet knowing there is nothing to be found there. Now you ask them – where are you rushing to...they reply – I’m going to the library” They look forward to going to the library.” Patricia Muzungu Mudenda, Head Teacher, Kabulonga Girls

Charmain, grade 11, Batoka Secondary School
The impact of the books

Impact 1: The quality and appropriateness of the books

The quality and appropriateness of the books has led to an increase in library visits. The key challenge addressed by the Study Hub was providing up-to-date resources. At all sites, libraries could be described as non-functioning. They were barely used because of the outdated resources. The modernity and relevance of the books was mentioned by all stakeholders. The teacher librarian at Kabulonga Girls School explained “Currently, the book collection is as early as 1964 and as late as 1995. It’s encouraging for the learners to find books that have modern words mentioned like, ‘Internet’ and ‘Twitter’…when they see this they are encouraged.”

Through the Hub, students are able to find exactly what they need from UK supplementary subject books. Grade 11 and 12 are using the revision guides, especially the CGP guides and find them useful.

Above: Njase Girls posing with their favourite books in the Study Hub. From left to right, Gertrude, grade 11, Matimba grade 11, Mulela grade 11, Ethel grade 12, Deborah grade 12, Rambisai grade 12.

During the focus groups Njase Girls School pupils were asked about the books they found to be particularly useful. They explained why the books worked for them.

“The notes are summarised and easy to understand” Rambisai

“Notes are more detailed than what I get in class.” Mulela

“This one contains exam questions and answers” Matimba

“Detailed instructions on how to carry out experiments.” Gertrude

When students are asked if the subject books or study guide content is different from the school text book content or the way they are taught in class, they explain that while methods may differ, explanations are simple enough for them to adopt.
“AQA Maths really helped for the exam. There are topics not done in class that are straightforward in this book. Calculus was not done in class but was there in the exam and because I read it from the Study Hub, I was able to answer the question. Some of the methods are simpler in the book. I choose the simpler method. Even teachers are encouraging us to use the simpler method from the Study Hub books. You want to find more information and you’ll find it in this book.” Orance (left), grade 12, Choma Day School.

Another student interviewed also reflected on how the books helped with her recent exams.

“…the way I have performed…I thought I’d fail, but the books have helped…” Nachinga, Grade 12, Libala Secondary School.

Teachers have viewed the books positively also, pointing out the specific benefits.

“Yes – Revision Guides: Biology especially has questions and answers and how marks are allocated to the answers which is very helpful.” Mr Muloongo, teacher Batoka School.

“The quality of the books is high. The material is relevant to what we are teaching – I’m one of the beneficiaries! Teachers are asking to borrow the books…but they are confined. Or else they might develop legs!” Christine Lungu Sikana, Head of Department, Libala Secondary School.

Impact 2: Books are boosting confidence

Whilst tracking student progress in exams was not part of the design, the project’s aim to support secondary school students prepare for their exams would include an increased sense of confidence that would help them achieve the ultimate goal – to pass. It is implicit in the design. Students voluntarily commented on the confidence the books and project was providing and others mentioned their ‘self-rated improved academic performance’ as a result of this relatively short amount of time with the new collection.

“They help you with how to approach the questions …gives you confidence in the exam.” Jetinah, grade 12 Choma Day School.

“Approaching exams more positively now…the tips have helped with new ways of studying.” Phelile, Grade 11- Kabulonga Girls School.

“…the more books that come the better our academic performance. These books – as long as you know how to use them – are very helpful…when I read them, I feel inspired” Chilongo Chilongo, Grade 11, Solwezi Urban School.

“There has been an improvement in English Language. In most books they use advanced English so we are also using advanced English!!” Ethel, grade 12 (Smiling) Njase Girls School.

“We learn new vocab….like in Zambia we use ‘stop’ but there is also ‘halt’. There is ‘explain’ but also ‘explicate’” Matimba, grade 11, Njase Girls’ School.
Teachers too have found creative ways to use the books, to address local curriculum requirements. “The books are helpful, especially with new syllabus in English….letter writing is new and some of the books illustrate how to write good letters. For example the ‘Get that Job CV’s – Steps to Success’ book provides an sample of an interview and cover letter – very helpful” Ms Juliet Lubinga, Head of English Language Department, Libala Secondary School, Lusaka.

Impact 3: Books are now accessible to all

The establishment of the Study Hub was also described as levelling the playing field for students’ access to information. Formerly, with only out dated books on offer, students who could afford it would use the internet or purchase their own book for information. Those who could not afford either, did without. “Some cannot afford to go to the Internet to do the research. The Study Hub has helped as it is free” Juliet Lubinga, Head of English Language department.

“Learners who could afford to buy books used to bring them to the library, but now those who cannot afford to buy books are finding new books in the library – thanks to this project.” Mr Shaba, teacher librarian, Matero Boys School, Lusaka.

Impact 4: Raising the profile of the library

i. Skilled and motivated librarians facilitate an improved library experience at the school

Capacity building of key school and library staff formed part of the project with a Book Aid International-led, three day workshop held in the MoGE training centre in Kabwe. Eleven Heads of Department and 12 librarians undertook capacity building in understanding young people, digital literacy and information skills and were equipped to run a manual-led exam preparation session.

All teacher librarians interviewed reported the training invaluable. When asked, all workshop participants rated the training highly, giving it a usefulness score between 8 and 9, with 10 being extremely useful. The majority are not qualified librarians nor have received any practical training on how to run a library or support learners in the run up to their exams. Highlights mentioned include managing a school library, running an exam preparation session, time management, understanding exam vocabulary, engaging with young people and dealing with stress.

During the evaluation interview, librarians were asked what new things the training had enabled them to do. Responses include the following:

“Yes – the Age and Stage session taught me how to engage with the exam takers. Some learners are completely ill prepared for the exam and as the time draws near, they are stressed out…the Stress Buster session helped me to understand this and what to suggest to calm them – reading through the suggestions in the PASS IT booklet or recommending the timetable planning template.” Alan Hagwelele, Provincial Librarian, Choma.

“I can tell a ‘first timer’ now and feel confident to refer them to a range of books. The arrangement that we were encouraged to undertake in the Study Hub also makes it easier for users to find the books they need.” Otiria Mufumbila, Library Assistant, Provincial Library Choma.

“I learnt a lot! About the project and implementation for the school, time management, exam prep for students, reading promotion for students, games etc. It has enhanced my creativity…following the training I did some research on library set up. The training has been an inspiration”. Mr Douglas Simonda, English Language and Geography, Njase Girls School.
“Now I am able to prepare the learners effectively for exams because of the training” Mrs Changatilla, Teacher of Civics, Choma Day School.

Head Teachers also commented on the activities undertaken by the teacher librarian following the training and attribute it to the training.

“The teacher librarian is more proactive and this shows through the general organisation of the library now. Teachers have been persuaded to donate some of their text books to the library – this has happened through the Head of Department.” Mr Kanuke, Head Teacher Njase Girls School.

“The school librarian is lobbying for the library now – for additional resources to complement the project. (E-learning and computers)” Susan Chitamba, English teacher, Solwezi Technical School.

“Previously he was not in the library. Now he is busy, because the number of students wanting access has increased. It was a white elephant before…. there was no staff orientation. There has been one now and staff members are showing interest.” Mrs Witola, Head Teacher Libala Secondary School.

“The school librarian has a changed mind-set…she has a programme now and targets to meet. She has sold the library to members of staff and pupils…the library now is flooded with pupils.” Given Mugwagwa, Head Teacher Solwezi Technical School.

“….we’ve had a library before, but the Study Hub has made the library more organised…an interesting place” Mr Kanuke, Head Teacher, Njase Girls School.

ii. Equipping librarians with digital literacy skills strengthens effective use of the internet by students.

A digital literacy skills module was taught in the librarians workshop. Digital literacy is part of the overall banner of information literacy and its elements include:

- Media literacy, that is, being able to create and read communications in a range of media
- Participating in digital networks for learning
- Studying and learning using technological environments, in both formal and informal settings
- Managing your digital/online footprint and reputation
- ICT skills in a range of devices and applications

Baseline data showed that three out of four provincial libraries had computers and Internet connectivity (Kasama does not) and 10 out of 12 schools do not have computers and or internet connectivity. There were efforts made by librarians to be creative with sharing their knowledge and use of the resources at the school. For example, at Solwezi Boys Technical School, the students have been taken through the theory of surfing and searching but the librarian experienced difficulties due to the lack of internet services at the school. At Batoka Secondary School, students were shown how to research using offline search software available at the school called ‘Kiwix’, which students use for research in place of the Internet. At Njase Girls’ School the librarian informs the students of alternatives to Google and child-friendly search engine platforms such as Duck-Duck Go and Dog Pile. In addition, users are taken through the online study and research tips and the discipline of not getting carried away when surfing the net for classroom content research. The students are taught this in class and as they visit the library.
Students are also being taught how to stay safe online as internet, with the dangers as well as the benefits outlined.

Clearly there is real commitment from some librarians to use what they have learned at the workshop to strengthen the library services. Solwezi Provincial Library’s efforts demonstrate just how quickly a service can be enhanced for patrons. After the Study Hub project training, they introduced a free ‘Computer Technology Related Training Programme’ to children between grades 1 and 12. The aim is to ensure that children are able to responsibly use technology to communicate, create and search for information, solve problems and evaluate information from a variety of sources. The main objective of the program is to ensure that children (school going and non-school going) gain literacy skills in the area of computing such as information, digital, media and technology literacy beyond the usual writing and reading skills. The training programme is conducted once a week and children are given the opportunity to access the computers every day in order to improve their skills.

Similarly at Choma Provincial Library, the librarian taught clusters of students from Chuundu Secondary and others from other secondary schools around Choma on what makes a good website, other available search engines other than Google which students had a chance to try on in the library.

iii. Skilled librarians can play a vital role in students’ exam preparation

Through the capacity building workshop, participants were equipped to run an exam preparation session for students using the contents of the PASS IT! booklet.

In the run up to exams, a total of 15 separate sessions were run from school and provincial libraries, engaging 735 students in total. These events have ranged from basic tips on time management and revision timetabling to an assembly-size audience to exercises in the library on time management and prioritising, complete with flip charts and post it notes.

The PASS IT! booklet contained topics on getting organised, revision & exam techniques, evaluating sources of information and finding information. The booklet provided also included a centre page pull out revision timetable template, a glossary of exam vocabulary and tips on beating stress.

The booklet was shown to be effective content for the learners. In the evaluation, the timetable template, the glossary of exam vocabulary and the time management content were frequently cited as valuable by teacher librarians and students alike.

At baseline, all students and Head Teachers reported assistance from teachers running revision classes on content. But there was no mention on planning, time management and exam techniques being offered. The responses below were captured by the Assistant Library Officer at Lusaka Provincial Library, Alice Musonda Mwape, on post it notes after the exam preparation session she ran.

“Enjoyed time management activity. Enjoyed effective searching. Learned to manage time. It was awesome!!”

“I have learnt how to analyse and come up with a conclusion. The activity was helpful for it will prepare me for the exam.”

“All activities have been enjoyed. I have learned how to research words and not wasting too much time on difficult things. I learnt how to do things and plan my work. All are helping.”
“All the activities we’ve had are cool. I have learnt how to manage my time. The word meaning and matching of words also helped me see the importance of knowing what each word means. One can fail for not knowing what a word means. From this I have seen the importance and I will take note of it.”

Alice like other librarians adorned the walls of the Study Hub with the work they have created through the exam prep events, reminding students on tips for exams.

From the Njase Girls School focus group, students also found the PASS IT! booklet both practical and educative.

“It helps us know how to manage our time to study.” Deborah, grade 12

“It helps us understand how to use the books.” Rambisai, grade 12

“The glossary is helpful … for example the word ‘describe’ is different from ‘list’.” Ethel, grade 12

The booklet was created as an individual handout to be given out to participants attending exam preparation events. Each Study Hub received around 20 copies each and decided these booklets should be held as reference materials within the libraries so more students could make use of them. As reference material, the booklet will serve many students including non-school examination students looking for assistance from the library, since the information is generic.

This adjustment to the use of the booklet appears to be a logical way to utilise this resource. The provincial librarian in Choma sited an example of how a group of grade 8 students were using the booklet, discussing the various topic areas, as they would any reference guide.

Students’ response to the assistance that the librarian can give regarding exam preparation is positive. They are finding the sessions useful even if they are not yet doing final exams.
Changes brought about by the Study Hub

All stakeholders were asked impact assessment questions relating to the changes they had noticed before, during or following the implementation of the project in their library or school. Interviewees were asked who was affected by the changes they identified, if the changes they noted were significant and what were the factors that led to the changes. Students were asked specifically if the changes were helping them prepare for their exams. All stakeholders interviewed reported the project as a positive intervention at their school or library. They identified key changes that they believe came about due to their participation in this project. They were also asked to identify other factors that contributed to the positive experience faced by students and teachers.

Changes mentioned ranged from changes in behaviour by stakeholders, the amount of reading now done and more money being spent on the library. The following changes were mentioned.

“The level of interest in the library has increased. Now excitement came with books….teachers and learners eager to go to the library. Teachers set exam prep questions to entice and encourage learners to visit the library to research the answers. The study culture has improved. They are forming study groups to look at the questions in the revision guides. They are getting extra information from them. Before the books were obsolete. Now we have a modern collection. Before there were lots of students sitting around – now they would rather go to the library…students who don’t want to be with noise-makers now choose to go to the library.” Deputy Head Teacher Mrs Sohati, Choma Day School.

“Learners – you hear them talking about the Study Hub…they say ‘I went to the library and found this very interesting book.” This was missing before.” Mr Chuma, teacher of history & religious education.

“To see boys going to the library is a great achievement. The new books inspire them.” Deputy Head Teacher Brother Mukanshi, Matero Boys School.

“Teachers have taken up the opportunity to use books for lesson prep especially teachers of physics, maths and chemistry.” Mr Ndikiti, teacher librarian Batoka School.

“They [fellow teachers] even speak to me now.” Mr Ng’wane, Teacher Librarian, Libala Secondary, Lusaka reflecting on a new respect for the books and the library that he had noted as a change in his school.

“Department books are now a part of the library instead of locked away and only accessible to the teacher. The project has made the administration take the library more seriously.” Martha Mubanga, Teacher Librarian Solwezi Technical School.

All of the stakeholders believed the changes were significant to the learners, teachers and the school as a whole:

“Yes. It has been important for the school. The project has changed the perception of the library and the staff. Teaching and administrative staff have responded well and co-operated with the librarian supporting and helping and advocating for the library.” Martha Mubanga, Teacher-Librarian Solwezi Technical School.

“The introduction of the library means now you are no longer teaching an empty vessel – now it’s like you are revising because they have already seen much of the material. Even those who have been dormant now participate.” Mrs Kambwali, English & religious education teacher.
Factors causing the changes

When asked what caused the changes, all of the respondents cited “the project” (books, training, library set-up) or “the books” (donated and purchased – they did not differentiate, nor by category) as the major factors. When asked what else contributed to the changes, factors mentioned focused on relationships and resources including support of other staff, support to revamp the library, Head Teacher making a budget available for the library’s refurb and establishing a new library in a classroom.

For the respondents, these additional elements were less obvious, but proved very helpful in the smooth implementation of the project, providing the necessary co-operation to make the intervention a success.

Challenges

The timing of the intervention

It must be acknowledged that the timing of the project was too late for the majority of grade 9 and grade 12 learners to use the Study Hub extensively in the preparations for their exams from mocks through to finals. Books arrived and training commenced in June – at the end of term 2, missing the lead-in to the mock examinations in April/May. Study Hubs were being established in July. August was a holiday so the marketing could only start in earnest in September. With only September and October to fully utilise the resources, exams were already upon the learners in November during the evaluation. With this timeline, many grade 9s who were part of the target group were finishing their exams and disappearing off for holidays. Grade 12 students were found, but in between exams and naturally, wishing not to be disturbed. One student lamented “Oh how I wish the Study Hub was here in term 2!” At the same time, this resource is a permanent fixture and thus stands ready for the next intake of examination takers, in addition to other grade students.

Insufficient space

The growing number of students attracted to the Study Hub has put pressure on school libraries which become full quickly. With the curb on lending, students are finding it difficult to sit comfortably in the space to use the books. Some schools have created a special timetable for examination classes so that students who need the space the most have access to it. Njase Girls’ School is making plans to increase the 50-seater library into a 10-seater space. Other schools have extended the library hours to evenings and Saturdays, to provide increased access. Choma provincial library has created outside seating for groups to use the materials on the site. Students will sit on the grass and within the confines of the library or school boundaries in order to use the books they need. Additional infrastructure is a lengthy process to achieve from the local authorities. The above solutions are effective though short term.
Lessons learned

For greatest impact, the Study Hub should be established by end of term one

The project is time sensitive in that in order to assess the maximum impact on student performance in a (yet to be established) measurable way the Study Hub has to be in position, training done and all stakeholders at the ready at the latest by the end of the first term of the academic year.

Orientation of the books by the teacher-librarian is key to teacher buy-in

The approach taken by the project to present books to the teachers and provide them with time to review their content, helped gain their trust and acceptance of the material to be used by themselves and for them to be treated as usable supplementary materials, by their students. This orientation was undertaken at the workshop, but was also carried at all schools through staff meetings and briefings in addition to invitations to teachers to visit the library to see the books. Orientations have proven to be effective in satisfying teachers’ curiosity or suspicion of UK materials’ efficacy in supporting their country curriculum.

Orientation of students was also proven to be valuable, especially of the subject books. Students may unknowingly regard these books as ‘foreign’ and therefore ‘not relevant to their syllabus’, but on closer inspection, led by the school librarian and recommended by the subject teacher, a broader range of books can become available to the student. Student orientations were part of the librarian’s management of the Study Hub and their own orientation of the stock proved essential in marketing the collections.

The Study Hub is a seed, needing a growth plan

An interview with Levy Joshua Makayi a grade 12 student, who had just completed his exams and a regular at the Provincial library in Solwezi encapsulates the need for growth in the diversity of content and access to relevant materials. His request was specific. He wants to become an engineer. “Yes the Study Hub is ok. Some books are good…others are not there. I would like to see Electronics books, Genetic engineering, Agricultural, Metamorphic studies. These would help me as a member of JETS [Junior Engineering & Technician Scientists].”

The request for additional books came from Head Teachers, teachers and students alike. They were excited about the impact that the modest donation had generated and naturally wanted more. ZLS led in sustainability discussions, offering their support to teacher librarians for set up, but brainstorming and making recommendations to Head Teachers regarding engaging parents for support to the library. This is fitting for their role on the important issue of growth and sustainability.

Theft is a real threat to the Study Hubs

In at least 3 schools, theft of books was reported. Librarians lamented at the loss of books (through complete removal from the library without permission or pages removed) which led to no borrowing of materials and the recording of what books students came to read. It remains a common challenge to libraries as yet. One school Head Teacher was planning to introduce CCTV into the library to discourage theft.
Marketing in a range of ways is important to increase use of the library

All schools used a range of ways to market the Study Hub, from announcements from Head Teachers in assembly to prefects visiting all examination classes advising staff. Once oriented, teachers were also able to refer students to key texts.

Head Teachers’ involvement provides significant support leading to success

In every interview, Head Teachers had seen the books, had an opportunity to review content and identified an increase in number of students using the library. They were aware of teachers’ use of the facility also. Head Teachers were supportive of their teacher librarians. At Solwezi Technical School, the librarian was able to secure five computers to enable students to use revision guide CDs and DVDs which came with the donation and engage in advanced information searches as learnt in the workshop. A laptop was also procured for the librarian on which to place the library accession register. At Njase Girls’ School and Rodwell Mwepu School, budgets for brand new furniture for the library was made available. This not only serves the students and modernises the library, it also greatly motivates the librarian.

Head Teachers, teachers and librarians can work positively together

Whilst ZLS has a mandate to support libraries in schools, often it lacks funding and drive. This intervention has demonstrated how the library service can support the development of reading for study or leisure in schools. The Choma Provincial Librarian was mentioned more than once by Head Teachers who have sought advice on library management in and outside of office hours. All parties are pleased with their achievement, levels of co-operation and collaboration.

“The project has made us more relevant to the school. It is due to this project that the library at Solwezi Urban has come into existence.” Constance Chilipa M’yoba Provincial Librarian, Solwezi.

“Reading culture – this is growing. If they are not going to the school library, they are going to the Provincial library.” “Innocent Malambo, Teacher Librarian, Rodwell Mwepu Secondary, Solwezi

An alternative model for the Study Hub project

In the original project design the provincial library would loan a rotating collection of books to participating schools on a termly basis. This model was amended when it became apparent that it would have greater impact in Zambian schools if the Study Hubs sat in the schools themselves with books being donated directly to schools and supported by the provincial libraries. The support for the project received from schools and local education authorities suggests that this new model is workable and is therefore an alternative to the original design for future Study Hubs rolled out with other partners.
**Conclusions**

This evaluation has demonstrated how the *Study Hub* project is an effective intervention to enable schools to deliver an improved quality of education in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4.

All five objectives have been achieved and outcomes recorded.

The print resources, the project’s method of engagement with Ministry of Education, the orientations of Head Teachers and capacity building of Heads of Department and teacher-librarians has led to a shift in attitudes and practices to increase reading and studying using quality materials. Teachers’ own review, acceptance, enthusiasm and use of the materials for enhancing their subject content and classroom learning experience is a strong indicator that there is a motivation and desire for a high quality of education in the school and this desire is being met through the *Study Hub*. When interviewed, all stakeholders noted the books within the library as the key factor leading to the increase in visits to use materials and not just to sit. Other factors also identified as contributing to the success of the *Study Hub* were the training of librarians, their use and efforts to use new skills and knowledge around digital literacy and support of school administration.

The motivation of teacher librarians through refresher training has also led to a more responsive library service delivered at school level. Librarians have new skills to share with students and can actively make a contribution to exam success at the school. The result is a huge increase in the number of students prepared to venture into the library and find support there. This is the start of preparing well for examinations.

Where, as in the case of Zambia, the Ministry of Education has identified reading as a key strategy for improved learner performance, this project has been a catalyst in promoting reading in participating schools. It has also been an example to the MoGE and other schools of the difference that a functioning library and high quality resources can make to students’ attitudes to learning and teachers’ attitudes towards teaching and reaching high education standards. As Mr Ntindi, Head Teacher of Batoka School Choma said of the *Study Hub*, "A good project that should be mainstreamed into all schools"

Support of the library by the students, Head Teachers and the education officials has led to a very effective intervention supporting the learning journey of all students. This model has the potential to be sustainable with project management support through the ZLS, modest financial support through MoGE and ongoing financial support from parents.
Recommendations

Education officials and Head Teachers engage parents to increase the number of books in the library

During the evaluation, there was more than one request for more books for the libraries because they were proving to be popular. The teacher librarian at Batoka Secondary School in Choma enquired of the CGP distributer as the school was interested in procuring additional copies. With a large number of grade 9 and 12 learners excluding other learners who also wished to use the books, there may be a future challenge for maintaining the stock following normal wear and tear. Njase Girls’ School library took the opportunity to weed out old books, purchase new furniture to revitalise the library space. With 95% of the books withdrawn because of age and condition, the teacher librarian and supporting Head Teacher were boldly and visually declaring the urgent need for books for his school and are planning fundraising from parents to acquire new stock. 1,000 books per Hub is a good start.

Storage of curriculum texts in the library and not in departments provides increased access

The students like having access to the local curriculum texts in their library. This inclusion has led to Department Heads in Rodwell Mwepu School agreeing to store their classroom text books in the library to enable learners to access the books outside of class. If adopted in all schools, this would swell the number of materials in the Study Hub and provide more access to texts by students. Other schools are considering taking the same action.