Inspiring Readers school library programme

Final evaluation report

In partnership with the National Library of Uganda and generously funded by Thomas Cook Children’s Charity

October, 2018
Executive Summary

This report presents the findings and recommendations from the final evaluation of phase one of Book Aid International and the National Library of Uganda’s (NLU) Inspiring Readers school library programme. The evaluation was undertaken by James Njuguna Kimani, Book Aid International’s Africa Representative and Stella Nekuusa, NLU’s Programme Manager, between 1st and 12th October 2018. The overall goal of this evaluation was to assess the extent to which the programme had brought changes to the beneficiaries in schools and hub libraries. The main aim was to examine the extent to which the project has met its objectives and identify key lessons and provide recommendations.

There is evidence of change brought about by the project in the lives of pupils, teachers, head teachers, parents, librarians and community at large. Findings indicate that there have been key successes experienced through the programme. These include; schools libraries have been established and are serving the learners and teachers in school; the hub librarians are able to support schools to develop their own school libraries; the trained teachers and head teachers are now confident and motivated to run their school libraries; the relationship between hub librarians and teachers has improved; storage of books and record keeping in the schools has improved leading to greater access to books for the learners and teachers. Further, the school libraries have developed a culture of reading among children; socialisation among pupils has improved as they share reading materials; and the library has eased the work of teachers as they have books to refer to and use in class.

Specific changes occasioned by the programme have been experienced by pupils, teachers, head teachers parents and hub librarians. These include greater access to books in schools; learners feel free and confident to handle and take care of books; learners in the project schools have developed a love for reading and are getting better in the command of the English language, are able to express themselves better, participate more in learning sessions; learners in schools have gained confidence in themselves and are getting better grades; there is improved discipline in schools; improved enrolment in schools due to presence of books; teachers have gained confidence and motivation in running school libraries; and there is improved communication among teachers and learners.

According to the hub librarians and teachers, the change that has been experienced is transformational and will remain with them for a long time to come. They indicated that Book Aid International has contributed to this change by providing reading materials and training for librarians and the teachers. This has led to increased knowledge, acquisition of new skills and improved motivation in both librarians and teachers.

Some key challenges experienced in the course of implementation of the project include lack of adequate time for teacher librarians to provide a library service in schools; lack of suitable space for the school library; few multiple copies of popular readers; more funding needed to undertake greater follow up of the schools; lack of support from local leadership; book distribution logistics; lack of confidence and time to keep monitoring data by teachers; and short duration of teachers’ training.

Key lessons learned include that the availability of story books allows schools to create regular reading periods; accessibility to books in schools is improving the reading culture; provision of
book storage facilities is key to their accessibility; librarian training helps refresh their knowledge, develop new skills and boosts their self-esteem; teacher training unlocks the teachers’ potential to develop their school libraries; hub librarians confidence and motivation has been improved through training and their role in school libraries’ establishment; bulk lending service to schools is key to success in reading promotion; and parents’ support of library development is key to project sustainability.

Key recommendations include the need to re-evaluate the role of teachers and hub librarians in monitoring and evaluation of project outcomes in schools and collecting and keeping monitoring data; streamlining of the book distribution at NLU’s Kampala offices as well as at each of the hub libraries to avoid unequal division of the books among hub libraries and the schools; strengthening and marketing of school outreach programmes by the hub libraries; boosting of the patronage of the hub libraries’ children section. Further, there is need for NLU staff to undertake a mid-term evaluation of the project in order to provide key technical guidance and address key implementation challenges at the hub and school levels in good time. Also, lessons learned and refresher workshops at the end of the project are recommended for both the hub librarians and teachers in order to enhance learning and knowledge transfer and ensure future project sustainability.
1.0 Introduction

The Inspiring Readers school library programme in Uganda was implemented in five public libraries in Uganda and 25 schools in Uganda’s Kabale, Masaka, Jinja, Mbale and Moroto regions from September 2017 to October 2018. The project is a collaboration between Book Aid International and the National Library of Uganda (NLU).

The project aimed to provide schools with access to book cupboards containing relevant, age-appropriate materials in English and local languages. It also involved training librarians and orienting teachers who are trained to increase support to children’s learning and children’s growth in their confidence and love of reading at school.

The project’s objectives were:
1) To increase interaction with reading materials among pupils in both local languages and English
2) To develop the confidence and participation of pupils in class through the use of reading materials and the development of a reading habit
3) To develop teachers’ skills, knowledge and confidence to support children in reading and learning
4) For head-teachers to increase opportunities for children and teachers to use the book box in the school day
5) To develop librarians’ skills in running outreach services and supporting teachers’ professional development and promoting reading and access to learning.

The evaluation was conducted between 1st and 12th October 2018 by James Kimani, Book Aid International’s Africa Representative and Stella Nekuusa, NLU’s Project Manager. The evaluation covered four out of five hubs in Kabale, Masaka, Jinja and Mbale and 14 schools. The evaluation utilised key informant interviews for the hub librarians, head teachers and teachers and focus group discussions with pupils in the schools visited. In total the project benefitted 12,227 pupils and 342 teachers in 371 schools.
### Table 1: School population (as at October 2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Libraries and schools</th>
<th>Total pupils</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>JINJA PUBLIC LIBRARY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Kirinya Prison Primary School</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. St. Gonzaga Primary School</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Police Barracks Primary School</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Seventh Day Adventists Primary School</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>5. Uganda Railways Primary School</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MASAKA PUBLIC LIBRARY</strong></td>
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<td>6. Ssenyage Public School</td>
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<td>7. Kijjabwemi Primary School</td>
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<td>8. Blessed Sacrament S Kimaanya Primary School</td>
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<td>9. Police Children Primary School</td>
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<td>10. St. Anthony Gayaza Primary School</td>
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<td><strong>MBALE PUBLIC LIBRARY</strong></td>
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<td>11. Bujoloto Primary School</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Mbale Police Primary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Busamaga Primary School</td>
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<td>14. Umar Primary School</td>
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<td>15. Zeusi Primary School</td>
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<td>17. Moroto Municipal Primary</td>
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<td>18. Moroto Prisons Primary</td>
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<td>19. Nakapelimen Primary</td>
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<td>20. Kakoliye Primary</td>
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<td><strong>KABALE PUBLIC LIBRARY</strong></td>
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<td>22. Rushaki Primary School</td>
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<td>23. Junction Primary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Kijuguta Primary School</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Kigezi High School Primary School</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,227</strong></td>
<td><strong>371</strong></td>
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2.0 Key findings

Outcome 1: Increased interaction with reading materials among pupils in both local languages and English.

Schools have set up cupboard libraries.

All the 14 schools had set up their libraries. Most schools had made an effort to create a library room where the cupboard library was located. Two out of three schools in Kabale, two out of three school in Masaka, two schools in Jinja and two out of three schools in Mbale had a dedicated library space.

Two other schools – Ssenyange Public School and Zesui Primary School in Masaka and Mbale, respectively, had set up their cupboard libraries in the Head Teacher’s secretary’s office while one school in Kabale – Kiguta Primary School – had set up the library in the Deputy Head Teacher’s office. During the focus group discussions, pupils could identify the contents of the cupboard library.
In all schools, the school libraries were available throughout the day. Teachers would either bring their pupils to the library during the scheduled library lesson or they would borrow books from the library teachers and take them to class. Mostly, the pupils borrowed books during break time as well as after the end of lessons in the afternoon.

“When we moved to the library from the small store to the new location, the books became accessible to learners and teachers. The environment is also good. We also weeded out all the old books due to the new knowledge gained in the training.” – Willy, teacher-librarian, BS Kimaanya Primary, Masaka.

The cupboard and plastic boxes.

Most of the schools preferred to have a metal cupboard due for security purposes. Hence, all the library cupboards in Uganda were made of metal sheets. The plastic boxes provided by the project were said to be very useful. In all schools, the boxes were used to move the books from the library into classroom or other areas where the pupils were using the books, eg. outside in the compound. Some of the schools use the boxes to move books borrowed from the hub library into the school and back.
Quality and quantity of the books.

The project provided 29,350 new UK donated books and 5,093 locally purchased books. Most schools reported that the quantities were sufficient. Previously, they had very few storybooks in the schools and this is the first time they got a huge consignment of supplementary books. The books enabled them to allocate a library lesson in the timetable for reading for each class. The only concern they had was that there were few copies of each title. They said that class sets would have been ideal so that each pupil reads the same books. We explained that this would have drastically reduced the number of titles they would have received. They were informed that the idea was for pupils to exchange the books so that they can enjoy a wide variety of books. There were disparities in the number of books received by the various schools in the five regions. They ranged from 700 to 1,800 books.

Suitability of the UK donated books.

The teachers reported that the books were suitable as most of them were readers and general information books. Some of the teachers indicated that there were few titles that were local though they were still happy with UK donated books. Some of the teachers noted that they used the books to expand their knowledge too as well as use them as tools to illustrate various subjects. The pictures were particularly liked by the teachers.

“Pictures make the children interested in reading the UK books.” – Willy, teacher-librarian, BS Kimaanya Primary School, Masaka.

“The books are suitable. They encourage learning of new words among pupils. Also, pictures make children interested in reading. The books have many pictures.” – Willy, Teacher-librarian BS Kimaanya Primary, Masaka.

“The books are suitable, good, interesting and the English is not complicated for the children. However, we have few copies of the titles available.” – Sophia Kyofa, Head Teacher, Ssenyange Public School, Masaka.

Mostly, teachers noted that children did not experience challenges with the UK donated books. However, a few teachers indicated that some of the English words in the donated books were difficult for learners. They also noted that the context of the books was foreign. Majority of the teachers however said that this was a good thing as it presented learning opportunities for both teachers and pupils.
Pupils got access to books during the library lesson. Also, in all schools, pupils were encouraged to borrow and read books during leisure time either in school or at home. Some of the teachers also used the donated books as teaching aids to teach various subjects.

**Regular reading period/library lesson.**

All the schools implemented a library lesson and every class had an opportunity to read library books each week. The majority of the schools allocated 30 minutes for lower primary and 40 minutes for upper primary per week. Some schools such as Blessed Sacrament Kimaanya in Masaka and Zesui Primary School in Mbale allocated one hour per class per week. Previously the schools had no library lesson as they did not have enough story books for pupils. Hence, the project helped them to reclaim the library lesson and make use of it. Besides the library lesson, the English language lesson had reading as an activity and the library books have come in handy as teachers use them to teach reading.

“Schools of this nature are not good on reading. In fact we did not have reading books before. We have just started reading since getting the books. Before the books came, teachers used to say that they did not have the readers. The kids have started borrowing the books.” – **Sophia Kyofa, Head Teacher, Ssenyange Primary school, Masaka**

The teachers noted that the availability of many story books and children’s readers allowed them to run library lessons in school which they could not do before as they had very few readers. The pupils reported they read storybooks, textbooks, dictionaries and recorded new words during the library lesson.

“The students can access the books easily and any time throughout the day. We even have a librarian.” – **Willy, teacher-librarian, BS Kimaanya Primary School.**

**Use of the books in classroom by teachers.**

The UK-donated and locally purchased books are highly used during the library and reading lessons. The teachers indicated that they give the pupils the books for reading during the library lesson for silent reading, read aloud, spelling words and storytelling. They also used them as reference books and use pictures as teaching tools. The cards were particularly useful for teaching reading. Some teachers used the books in different subjects e.g. teaching body parts in science, colours and geographical features.
Outcome 2: Confidence and participation of pupils in class developed through the use of reading materials and the development of a reading habit.

Children’s behaviour in the classroom after reading the books.

Teachers reported that the pupils were becoming more confident, answering questions more, were able to stand in front of the class and read aloud. Further, their language and pronunciation of words has improved greatly helping them to express themselves in class. The following are some expressions from pupils during the focus group discussions:

“I could not stand before others and talk but now I can stand confidently at the parade and talk, and advise other pupils.” – Pupil at St Gonzaga Primary School, Jinja.

“I can read confidently in front of everyone because I know some new words.” – Pupil, Busamaga Primary School, Mbale.

“Before, we used to fear and shiver when teachers asked us to read in front of the class. Nowadays everyone can read easily and we no longer fear.” – Pupil, Mbale Police Wanyera Primary School, Mbale.

Children reading for pleasure.

Children are reading for pleasure besides studying for exams. The pupils are borrowing the story books from school libraries and reading them both at schools and at home. The pupils enumerated a number of story books which they considered their favourite stories. Some pupils narrated the stories they had read from the books and the key life lessons they had learned. Some of the lessons learned by pupils include:

“Preserving the environment - I have learned to keep things that God created. I learned the danger of cutting trees. I will never cut trees.” – Pupil at Ssenyange Primary School, Masaka.

“I have learned the danger of being uneducated.” – Pupil at Ssenyange Primary School, Masaka.

“I learned that I have a right to read.” – Pupil at Ssenyange Primary School, Masaka.

“I have learnt to keep a secret.” – Pupil at Zeusi Primary School, Mbale.

“I have learnt not to trick others.” – Pupil at Zeusi Primary School, Mbale.

“The books have helped me to know how to work hard and to succeed.” – Pupil at Busamaga Primary School, Mbale.

“Consulting my teachers freely.” – Pupil at Busamaga Primary School, Mbale.
“I can help my parents every day and every year.” – Pupil at Busamaga Primary School, Mbale.

“I have learnt how to be obedient.” – Pupil at Busamaga Primary School, Mbale.

“Some books have taught me how to love my country.” – Pupil at Busamaga Primary School, Mbale.

“To be careful with my health and avoid getting infected through sharing razor blades.” – Pupil at Busamaga Primary School, Mbale.

“I learn what I will be in future through books.” – Pupil at Busamaga Primary School, Mbale.

Some of the pupils reported having learned some new skills. These include:

“I am now able to use the dictionary.” – Pupil at St Anthony Gayaza Primary School, Masaka.

“I know how to read write and spell new words.” – Pupil at Ssenyange Primary School, Masaka.

“I did not know how to dance traditional dance before. We got some books in our local language and they have some local songs. We practice and dance. Our parents are surprised when they hear us sing these songs.” – Pupil at Jinja SDA Primary School.

The pupils also noted that the new books helped them improve their reading and spelling, learn new words and their meaning, improve their pronunciation of English words, comprehension and spoken English.

Most of the pupils did not have books at home and the only source of books was the school. Many of their parents did not read due low literacy levels.

Increase in confidence among pupils after school received the books.

The confidence of pupils greatly improved through reading. The teachers noted that the pupils can expresses themselves better which boosts their confidence in communicating with teachers and other learners.

The following are some reflections of pupils:

“After reading these books, my performance is ‘really really good’.” – Pupil at Jinja SDA Primary School.

“I used to be shy but now when visitors come to the school, I go to meet them, talk to them and lead them to the teacher they are looking for.” – Pupil at Jinja SDA Primary School.

“The books have helped me to know how to work hard and to succeed.” – Pupil, Busamaga Primary School, Mbale.
“Before vernacular was spoken throughout the school but now the pupils are speaking in English.” – Pupil, Mbale Police Wanyera Primary School, Mbale.

“We could not sing the national anthem in English but now we can sing confidently.” – Pupil, Mbale Police Wanyera Primary School, Mbale.

The pupils indicated that various people in the community helped them whenever they came across new words or difficulties during reading. These include teachers, friends, parents, siblings and neighbours. Further, they have learned how to check the meaning of new words in dictionaries.

Outcome 3: Improved reading levels of children through regular library usage.

Children’s attitude towards books.

The pupils have adopted a very positive attitude about books as they enjoy reading. Teachers reported that the pupils are borrowing books from the school library frequently.

“The pupils borrow books frequently. They now know they can achieve their career through reading. When the teacher says it's library time they all clap out of excitement.” – Frank Turyahabwe, teacher-librarian, Junction Primary School, Kabale.

During the focus group discussions with pupils, most noted that they enjoyed reading story books very much:

“The books have helped me to love reading. Also, they have helped me to be brave in any situation even though I am young.” – Pupil, Busamaga Primary School, Mbale.

“The books have helped me to love English.” – Pupil, Zeusi Primary School, Mbale.

Both teachers and pupils indicated that regular use of library usage affected their reading levels.

“Before reading the story books, my English was poor but now it has improved and teachers like me.” – Pupil, St Gonzaga Primary School, Jinja.

“I couldn’t speak English. Now I can. Our parents are very happy and more children are being brought to this school.” – Pupil at Jinja SDA Primary School.

“There is a boy who used to struggle but because of his frequent reading his performance has changed completely. He is interested in getting a different book every day. He has been promoted to be a library prefect.” – Kyobutugi Vashti, Deputy Head and teacher-librarian, Kijuguta Primary School, Kabale.
Presence of promotion messages encouraging pupils to read.

Few schools had reading promotion messages on their walls. Teachers were encouraged to come up with some inspiring messages that will trigger the pupils to read. However, at Junction Primary School in Kabale, they had put several messages in their school's library.

Outcome 4: Teachers have the skills, knowledge and confidence to support children in reading and learning.

How teachers use of books in class.

Teachers are using the new books to get content for their lessons, identify and interpret new words, find exercises for pupils to do and to use for comprehension exercises.

“We are using the books every day and in every class for various subjects.” – Willy, teacher-librarian, BS Kimaanya Primary.

“We are able to find books related to subjects and use them in class.” – Sophia Kyofa, Head Teacher, Ssenyange Public School, Masaka.

The teachers were able to assess the progress of their children through observation, questioning, listening to their students reading and tests. Other methods include debates, spelling bees, quizzes and roleplay.

How the development of the school library is affecting teachers’ confidence.

The teachers have been positively affected by the development of the school libraries in their schools.

“The libraries have become a research centre for teachers. They are doing more research than before when they were contented to refer to one book. It is now easy to pick the books from the shelves. Before, the books were in cartons.” – Kisoboyi, Betty Juliet, Head Teacher, Busamaga Primary School, Mbale.

“The library has affected the confidence of teachers as they have more teaching resources. The classes are livelier with more activities for learners.” – Agripina, Head Teacher, BS Kimaanya Primary School, Masaka.
Outcome 5: Head-teachers increase opportunities for children and teachers to use the book box in the school day.

Head teachers’ view on reading and libraries.

Head teachers were clear on the benefit of reading and the role that libraries played in literacy development in their schools. The following are some sentiments from the head teachers:

“When the school has a library it motivates children to read and develop the foundation of a culture of reading.”
Rubuga Ishmael, Head Teacher, Junction Primary School, Kabale.

“Library is number one because you cannot teach without making reference to books.” – Jeminah Kamara, Head Teacher, Kitumba Primary School, Kabale.

“Reading increases the fluency and comprehension of learners. Library is a good thing in school as it is a research centre. It also helps in providing materials for leisure.” – Kisoboyi, Betty Juliet, Head Teacher, Busamaga Primary School, Mbale.

How head-teachers support teachers in literacy development.

The head teachers have been supporting teachers in literacy development in their schools in various ways. These include procurement of learning resources, allocating time for library lessons and reading time as well as encouraging and motivating them to assist pupils to develop early reading skills.

“We have employed a librarian to man the library. She has been very helpful in processing, organizing and making books accessible to the entire school population. With the help of the school librarian, our library is open and accessible every day of the week between 8.00am to 6.00pm. Sometimes it is open over the weekend as the school is a boarding school. Books are also carried to classes with the plastic boxes for reading.” – Agrippina, Head Teacher, BS Kimaanya Primary School, Masaka.

Head teacher visit to the hub library.

Though most of the head teachers had visited the public libraries, they were not regular visitors due to a lack of time and the long distance to the public library. Further, the supply of over 1000 books in their schools made them feel that their pupils needed to exhaust the books in school before they could borrow more. However, they communicated with the hub librarians frequently on the phone and the librarians also visited their schools regularly. They reported that they encouraged their teachers to visit the local public libraries and some of them facilitated their teachers to go and borrow books in bulk from the public libraries. Head teachers were encouraged to make use of the books available in the Children’s Corners of the hub libraries as well as encourage their pupils to visit the children sections particularly over weekends and holidays.
Previous effort to start a library or reading programme in the school.

Prior to the Inspiring Readers programme, the majority of the head teachers had not put much effort in to start a school library in their schools. However, Junction Primary school in Kabale had started constructing a library in school.

“Before, we even did not know the number of books in the school as recording was poor. Now we have recorded them and we know them. With the new knowledge and skills gained from the training, we felt we needed to set up a library. We sensitized the school management, PTA and partners. They now support the library and that is why we have a big space for the library now. We even lobbied school management to employ a librarian and now we have one. Hence, we have managed to mobilize resources for the school library. We still want to do a bigger library in future.” – Agripina, Head Teacher BS Kimaanya Primary School, Masaka.

“Previously, I thought the environment was not supportive. However, after the training, I got the motivation to have one and I now I have it.” – Agripina, Head Teacher BS Kimaanya Primary School, Masaka.

Plans to further develop the school library.

The motivation to expand the school libraries is high. Most of the head teachers were looking forward to much bigger and well-resourced school libraries.

“So far we managed to mobilize resources for our school library for buying books and employing a librarian. However, we still want to do a bigger library in future. We are putting together a proposal to expand the library. We are establishing links with others e.g. old girls and boys to get more resources for the library.” – Agripina, Head Teacher BS Kimaanya Primary School, Masaka.

“The immediate future plan is to break the wall between the two rooms and expand the library room and buy some furniture. The longer term plan is to construct a bigger library.” – Kyobutugi Vashti, Deputy Head Teacher, Kijuguta Primary School, Kabale.

Outcome 6: Librarians develop skills in running outreach services and supporting teachers’ development, promoting reading and improving access to learning.

The relationship between teachers and librarians.

Through the programme, librarians and teachers have developed a good working relationship. Prior to the project, librarians felt overlooked by teachers. The teachers did not understand the relevance of librarians in their work and what they could offer.

“The relationship is good since they see us as resource persons.” – Josephine, Masaka Hub Librarian.

“Before the teachers did not know that librarians new many things in the area of teaching. After training the teachers and sharing the books with them, teachers have developed respect for us.” – Alex, Kabale Hub Librarian.
“Josephine [the librarian] brings e-readers to school regularly. She has a close relationship with our school librarian and has provided her with technical support during the library set up.” – Agrippina, Head Teacher BS Kimaanya Primary School, Masaka.

Visiting of the Children’s Corners in the hub libraries by children from project schools.

Over two thirds of the pupils had not visited the public library. This was mainly due to lack of knowledge about its existence as well as distance from their schools and homes. However, those who had visited indicated that they found the public library very useful as it had very many books for children and a quiet environment for reading. None of the schools had visited in Masaka. Two schools in Mbale visited the library. Zesui Primary School indicated that they did not visit the library because the Children’s Corner in Mbale Public Library was very small. The two schools evaluated in Jinja visited the library. One contributing factor to the failure of the pupils to visit the public libraries is that some of them, like Kabale Public Library, do not open over the weekend. This is due to a lack of staff. The hub librarian was encouraged to give days off to his staff during the week so they could open the Children’s Corner over the weekend. Further, the schools were asked to encourage children (and their parents) to patronise the Children’s Corner of the hub libraries.

Teacher and pupil visits to the public library.

Teachers were not used to using the public libraries as well as taking their pupils to the public library indicating weak linkages between the schools and the public libraries. Some teachers also indicated that the public libraries children sections were small and squeezed.

“I used to take my children to the library when it was in the old site. After relocation, the children section is very squeezed and I no longer take them.” – Teacher, Mbale Police Primary School, Mbale.

Bulk lending service to schools.

This was not a popular service in many of the hub libraries involved. Schools in Masaka, Jinja and Mbale had not utilised this service in a long time. However, in Kabale, the three schools interviewed had utilised the bulk borrowing scheme. They utilized the plastic boxes provided through the project for this purpose as well. This is largely due to aggressive marketing of the service by the public librarian in the area.
Outcome 7: Development of librarians’ skills in supporting teachers’ management of school libraries and their professional development in promoting reading and learning and assisting public libraries to develop their outreach programme capacity.

Benefits of the librarians’ ‘Training of Trainer’ (ToT) workshops in school library management and reading promotion.

All the four hub librarians interviewed reported that they greatly benefitted from the ToT training for librarians undertaken by Book Aid International.

“It helped me with skills to train teachers. I learned things like the need to boost self-esteem when working with teachers.” – Patience, children’s librarian, Kabale Hub Library.

“I got the courage and confidence to face the Head teachers and teacher. I was able to impart knowledge and skills, supervised them and facilitating them with learning materials. This earned me respect among them. The training was very beneficial and good for us because it exposed us to techniques on how to be a good presenter. The content was very good for both the librarians and the teachers. It helped me to impart the knowledge and skills on setting up libraries.” – Hellen, Mbale Hub Librarian.

“The training refreshed my knowledge set and now I am more confident and able.” – Josephine, Masaka Hub Librarian.

How librarians have used the knowledge and skill gained from the ToT training.

The librarians have used their new knowledge acquired in the training to train teachers in how to set up their school libraries. Further, they have become a resource in their regions:

“I was able to train the teachers. The training gave me courage of organizing a reading promotion event which I had not done before.” – Josephine, Masaka Hub Librarian.

“We have a donor - Books for Africa, who invited me to train teachers on how to establish school libraries in 10 other schools in my region.” – Hellen, Mbale Hub Librarian.

“We are now running successful library outreach programs. We are also mobilizing resources through proposal writing.” – Livingstone, Jinja Hub Librarian.
“We only used to carry out a reading aloud activity in the library. Now we have a variety of reading promotion activities including role pays, spelling bee, Hot seat activities which the children have embraced and enjoyed.” — Livingstone, Jinja Hub Librarian.

“I have had an attitude change which works everywhere for me even in my other work. I have also learnt how to organise training workshops as well and other programs.” — Alex, Mbale Hub Librarian.

Improvement of school outreach programme since the ToT librarians training:

The hub libraries’ schools outreach programmes have significantly improved. More schools are borrowing books in bulk. In Masaka, so far they have concentrated on the five project schools and intend to expand to other schools. In Jinja, librarians are doing outreach with 20 schools. Other schools that were not bothered with the hub library before are now contacting librarians after hearing from teachers at the project schools.

“Though we are still working in the same 20 schools, more books are being borrowed by the schools as we have increased the frequency of school outreach activities.” — Livingstone, Jinja Hub Librarian.

Relationship between the hub library and the schools.

The librarians are interacting more with the schools and the teachers have been consulting with the librarians. The hub librarians have observed that their relationship with schools has been strengthened and the teachers now respect them and regard them as knowledgeable and relevant to their work.

How the teacher training on school library management and reading promotion went.

In all the regions, the training went well. In Masaka, the hub librarian was a bit scared as she led her workshop immediately after attending the ToT training. However, it turned out well. The Kabale librarian said it went well as he was able to invite senior staff of the council including the Principal Education Officer, Inspector of Schools, political leaders and the head teachers and teachers. They appreciated the fact that the training captured other areas besides managing the library including resource mobilisations and monitoring and evaluation. The senior council staff like the programme and also participated in the subsequent launch of the project.

The hub librarian indicated that the training could be improved by ensuring that certificates are provided in addition to allocating more time for the training.
The teachers have utilised the knowledge and skills gained in their training by setting up their school libraries and keeping good records including accession and lending registers as well as running various reading promotion activities in schools.

**Hub librarians running reading sessions in schools.**

In Mbale, the hub librarian has run a reading session once a term per school. The other hub librarians have not run reading sessions in schools yet. They noted that this would disrupt schools’ timetables as well as the fact that most schools were very far from the hub library.

**Example of how the head teachers have acted as leaders of the school in terms of literacy development.**

Several noticeable initiatives were noted. These included:

- In Mbale Busamaga Primary School, the Head Teacher allocated a large space for the library, procured shelves, desks and a carpet for pupils to sit on in the library.

- In Jinja SDA Primary School, two teachers were trained but the school co-opted a third teacher and oriented him. They also allocated a new space to the library and allowed pupils to visit the library after 4.30pm and during other breaks. The Head Teacher insists that the library lesson is used for reading. The Head Teacher also attended the reading promotion event in Jinja Public Library.

- In BS Kimaanya Primary School in Masaka, the head teacher managed to convince the school management committee to allocate the library a large room and employ a trained librarian to man the library. The library is now vibrant and accessible to teachers and learners throughout the week including the weekend.

- In Junction Primary School Kabale, the Head Teacher managed to use a large purpose built space for the library. Pupils can read from there as he has provided basic furniture.

- In Mbale Police ‘Wanyera’ Primary School, they built a new room for the library and procured shelves and desks for pupils to sit at when visiting the library.

**Changes in work with schools since receiving books from Book Aid International.**

The hub libraries have intensified activities with project schools. The librarians are working more closely with the teachers and spending time at the schools providing technical support in establishment of the libraries and reading promotion. Other schools not in the project are also asking to be considered for similar interventions. Some of the project schools are also sending their pupils to the hub libraries.
Surprises in the course of the project implementation.

There were several surprises brought about by the project. There is now renewed interest in library services by the councils the library services fall under. In Kabale, the project has created desire to move the library to a more central location. In Masaka, the council is involving the hub librarian in their activities as they have found the library relevant to education services in the region due to the creation of a reading culture. They are surprised that the library has the capacity to mobilise such resources for schools. In Jinja, teachers never used to take librarians seriously. Now the librarians feel respected by teachers.
3.0 Key successes

Key successes have been registered in implementing this project. The hub librarians identified the following successes:

- The hub librarians were able to support schools to develop their own school libraries. Several schools have managed to set aside a dedicated space or rooms for their libraries.
- The project has provided a variety of reading resources for the project schools through the hub libraries. Further, they trained the teachers and head teachers who are now confident and motivated to run their school libraries.
- Librarians’ relationship with teachers and children has improved and they feel respected and motivated to work with schools.
- The schools have the capacity to mobilise resources for setting up their own expanded school libraries and have started to do so.
- Other schools not in the project are asking to be involved due to the successes of the project.
- Storage of books and record keeping has improved in the schools, leading to greater access to books for learners and teachers.

On the part of the schools, the most successful aspects reported include:

- The library has developed a culture of reading among pupils and book borrowing in school has increased.
- Socialisation among pupils has improved as they share reading materials.
- The establishment of school libraries has led to less damage and loss of books. They are also easier to access and better arranged.
- The library has eased the work of teachers as they have books to use in lessons. Teachers have come to understand that there are books that are relevant for them in the library. Further, they can relate when the children talk about certain stories.
- Teachers have learnt library management skills. Though the schools had some books before, teachers didn’t know anything about library management and the books stores were not well kept.
- In those libraries with seating space, pupils now sit in the library and read before they borrow more books to read in class and at home.
- In Busamaga Primary School in Mbale, the school management committee members approved of the library and authorised for the installation of metallic door and secure windows for the library.
4.0 Changes as a result of the project

Several changes have been reported by teachers, head teachers and hub librarians. These include:

Greater access to books.

Children have experienced borrowing books and reading for leisure for the first time. They now feel free and confident to handle and take care of books. They are able to read at school and at home. Schools have reinstated the library lesson to give learners opportunities to read for enjoyment while in school. Teachers also have access to reference materials that they use in their lessons. Access to books has helped them to improve their teaching methods.

“Because the books are displayed well, the learners can see them more clearly and they take them. Before, we had some books which were inaccessible. Learners come and read at their free time, e.g., break or lunch time. This way incidental learning is encouraged in the school. Teachers too are now borrowing the books.” – Willy, teacher-librarian, BS Kimaanya Primary, Masaka.

Love for reading.

Pupils in the project schools have developed a love for reading and their command of the English language is improving, they are better able to express themselves, participate more in learning sessions and are consequently getting better grades.

“The reading culture has improved in the school. Even learners’ handwriting is changing. Learners’ performance is also improving.” – Agripina, Head Teacher, BS Kimaanya Primary School.

“The books are a reason for me to come to school. They make the school interesting and more pupils have joined our school because of the books.” – Pupil, Blessed Sacrament Kimaanya Primary School, Masaka.

Improved confidence among learners.

Children have gained confidence in themselves and they have developed their abilities in reading, self-expression and debating. Performance in class has improved and children have become competitive as they try to outshine each other. Pupils given leadership opportunities in library management feel proud of themselves.

Teacher confidence and motivation.

Due to acquired knowledge and skills, teachers have managed to establish functional school libraries and are very proud of this achievement. Though demanding, they are willing to go the extra mile to make books accessible to learners and teachers in their schools. Further, they are working very closely with each other as they discover and make use of learning materials available.

“There is a greater collaboration among teachers as they do research and share ideas on how to use the learning materials. This has promoted team work among teachers. Further, there is sense of responsibility created among learners as they have to cover the books they borrow to preserve them.” – Kisoboyi, Betty Juliet, Head Teacher, Busamaga Primary School, Mbale.
Head teachers have taken ownership of the project.

Head teachers in all schools are supporting their teachers with the resources required to establish the school libraries. Further, they have provided time for children to read in school by reinstating the library lessons in the schools’ timetable.

“I have woken up, made this innovation [created a library] and am now soliciting library resources for the school library from different stakeholders.” – Agripina, Head Teacher, BS Kimaanya Primary School.

Improved communication among teacher and learners.

Teacher-pupil relations have improved as children are better able to express themselves. Teachers love their pupils and the pupils love the teachers too.

Improved discipline in schools.

There is improved discipline in schools since the start of the project. Absenteeism, escaping and truanting from school has drastically decreased as pupils are motivated to come to school so that they can read the books.

Improved enrolment.

The numbers of pupils enrolled in project schools has increased as parents have seen the difference since their children started reading the books. Pupils are being transferred from other schools to attend schools with books.

“The development of the school library has a great impact as parents are acknowledging that children are now involved in reading. The enrolment of the school is shooting high. The library also has a fulltime librarian.” – Agripina, Head Teacher, BS Kimaanya Primary School.

Parental support.

Some schools have started to involve parents in establishing school libraries. Some of the parents are supportive of the idea and are willing to contribute to the development of school libraries.

“Design the project in such a way that parents also are talked to about reading. The hub librarian can be invited to do this by the schools, (not just the schools teachers).” – Kwetiba Alice, Head Teacher, St Anthony Gayaza Primary School, Masaka.

School management support.

School management committees have seen the importance of having good libraries in school. They are prioritizing on expenditure for schools libraries including procurements of shelves and other library furniture and equipment, improvement of library security and employment of a librarian.

Librarians are more confident.

Hub librarians have become more confident and efficient in their work. After increasing their knowledge and skills in the training and helping schools establish their own libraries, hub librarians have rediscovered their importance and purpose in the community. They are now more respected by Municipal Councils and the community they serve and this has motivated them.
Acceptance of library services by local authorities.

Municipal Councils have recognised the role of libraries because they have seen the work the libraries have done with schools. In Kabale, they have indicated that the teachers trained through the project won’t be transferred from their schools so that they can implement the project. In Masaka, the education department is involving the hub librarian in its activities. This has never happened before.

Who has felt the change?

The change has been felt by all in school including head teachers, teachers, pupils, school management committees and parents. The hub librarians have also felt the change.

“Though all in school have felt the change including pupils, teacher and school management committee, the parents seemed to have felt a greater change than teachers because they are now giving us more children.” – Agrippina, Head Teacher, BS Kimaanya Primary School, Masaka.

“When school inspectors come and hear pupils reading they leave the school very happy.” – Kyobutugi Vashti, Deputy Head Teacher, Kijuguta Primary School, Kabale.

“Some parents bought bags for their children upon the recommendation of the teachers so that they can carry home the borrowed library books. There is real transformation for teachers as they are developing a culture of using books as they are available. Also, pupils will continue reading and demanding for books.” – Kwetiba Alice, Head Teacher, St Anthony Gayaza Primary School, Masaka.

The significance of the change.

According to the hub librarians, the change is transformational as they are now skilled and better able to help schools develop their own libraries. The school libraries are creating a reading culture among pupils that will last.

In Kabale, the project has attracted interest of local politicians. They now expect the librarian to continue supervising the schools after the project period is over. They are asking the Education Department in Kabale to create a program to continue monitoring the project in the schools. Further, the authorities also want to engage parents to support other schools to emulate the project and develop more libraries.

Some of the teachers had the following to say about the significance of the changes:

“The changes are transformational as teachers will continue teaching children how to read and in effect make them love reading.” – Agrippina, Head Teacher BS Kimaanya Primary School.

“The change is transformational as children are able to communicate and have developed confidence. They will apply this in exams, in secondary school and life experiences including seeking for jobs.” – Ismael, Head Teacher, Junction Primary School, Kabale.

How Book Aid International has contributed to the changes.

Both teachers and hub librarians indicated that Book Aid International has contributed to this change by providing increased access to books in schools through book donation. The training provided to librarians and the teachers has given the teachers knowledge, new skills and
motivation to turn the schools’ bookstores into libraries and make the books accessible to learners and teachers.

“Book Aid has encouraged us to read story books. It has inspired us and our learners.” – Justine Mugimba, teacher-librarian, Zeusi Primary School, Mbale.
5.0 Key challenges experienced during project implementation

Lack of adequate time to provide the library service in schools.

The teacher-librarians are overwhelmed as they have teaching duties as well as duties related to library management. The two teachers in each school who took part in the training have been assisting each other to ensure they provide a library service in the schools and sometimes they had to work over the weekend and holidays especially to accession/record the books. At Jinja SDA School they had enlisted the support of a third teacher. In most schools, they had also appointed library prefects who also gave their own free time to serve in the library. Time tabling classes for the library lesson also helped in having an organised way of accessing the library by class.

Lack of suitable space for the school library.

In some schools, e.g. Zeusi Primary in Mbale, Ssenyange Primary in Masaka and Kijuguta Primary in Kabale, there were no suitable rooms for establishing the school library and the cupboard library was either kept in the head teacher or deputy head teacher’s offices or in the staff room. However, they are all looking forward to securing space in the future.

Few multiple copies of popular books.

There were no class sets of books popular with learners. Teachers would prefer to have more copies of the same titles so that they can use them in class.

More funding needed to support greater follow up.

Some schools are far away from the hub libraries and it has been difficult for the librarians to make frequent visits to make adequate follow up.

Lack of support from Municipal Councils.

In most areas, the library has been profiled as a dormant and less important department in the municipality. This has had an effect on resource allocations for services. However, following the project, there has been renewed interest on the part of council management, department of education and even politicians. Librarians are now being invited to meetings to talk about the project.

Loss of funds.

The hub librarian in Masaka was defrauded of funds by a local cupboard fabricator. She had to involve the police to recover some of the funds. However, she had to meet some of the cost of the cupboards herself in order to complete the work.
Book distribution to library hubs and schools.

There were challenges with book distribution at two levels. At NLU level, some books were left behind by the hub librarians and they had to come back for the remaining books later. This is partly due to books being kept in different rooms in the NLU facility owing to lack of storage capacity. Also, distribution was handled by project staff who were overwhelmed with other work. Further, there were some disparities in the number of books received by the schools in the five regions. The schools reported receiving between 700 to 1,800 books, meaning that some schools may have gotten more books than others. It was clarified that there could be some books remaining to be given to the schools. This has a significant effect on the project outcomes in schools.

Monitoring and evaluation of project outcomes in schools.

It was expected that head teachers and teachers would complete various forms as they monitored school library provision. These were the Librarian’s Visit Record, the Reading Activity Log, the Library Lesson Record, the Accession Register, the Book Record, the Lending Record, the Librarian Outreach Record and the Teachers’ Tracking/Pupils Progress Tool. Teachers only partly completed these records as they were overwhelmed with other work and sometimes found them complicated to fill in. Others confessed that they did not understand them.

The teachers’ training at hub level was short.

Hub librarians noted that the time allocated for the teacher training was too short to cover the content provided. Many of them did three days training. They proposed refresher training or a ‘lessons learned’ workshop to bridge knowledge gaps and boost sustainability of library activities in the schools.
6.0 Key lessons

Availability of story books allows schools to create regular reading times.

Previously, most schools did not have storybooks. The project provided them with storybooks and they are now creating regular reading times and introducing library lessons for each class every week. Pupils in Primary 1 to 3 and those in Upper Primary 4 to 7 are spending at least 30 minutes and 40 minutes reading story books, respectively. Some schools are allocating a whole hour for reading as well providing extra time during breaks and after school for learners to access the books.

Accessibility to books is improving the reading culture.

Pupils are enjoying reading the library books and are asking to be given books to read. During the focus group discussions, pupils indicted that they really loved reading story books and they have learned lot from them. Teachers’ new knowledge of use of supplementary books has made them embrace the school library and they are making regular use of the books to aid teaching different subjects.

Librarian ToT training.

The hub librarians’ ToT training greatly benefitted the hub librarians as they refreshed their knowledge and learned new skills in school library management and reading promotion. They are now more confident and able to assist teachers in establishing and managing their school libraries. Their self esteem was also boosted by their new skills to train teachers.

Teacher training unlocks teachers’ potential to develop their school libraries.

The training gave teachers the confidence and skills to organise their school book stores into libraries and some schools (e.g. Blessed Sacrament Kimaanya School in Masaka) were able to convince school management to allocate space for the library. Good organisation of the books made them easily accessible to learners and teachers. Usage of books has increased as a result.

Provision of storage for books is key.

The cupboards have been useful in storing the books. Some schools used to keep their books in cartons and they are now able to store books in a more accessible fashion. Due to insecurity issues, the project in Uganda decided to use metal cabinets for the schools. These were highly appreciated as they are lockable and this helped maintain control over access to the books. The plastic boxes were also useful in moving the books from the library into classrooms or other areas of the school.

Relationships between schools and public libraries have improved.

There are improved connections between the schools and public library in each region. The librarians are making regular visits to schools and the teachers have started to make use of the public libraries. It was uncommon for the librarians to visit the schools. Equally, the teachers seldom visited the libraries.
Librarians’ confidence has improved.

The confidence of librarians has increased as a result of the project as they are now seen as important members of the community. The schools and education officials in each region recognised that they are knowledgeable and have important skills and that it is through them that they can access the donated books. Librarians feel more respected by teachers, other professionals and community members in their regions which motivates them in their work.

There is need for a clear book distribution plan.

A clear distribution plan needs to be developed so that it is very clear how many books go to each hub and also how many books are distributed to each school by each hub library. It is also recommended that all schools collect their books from the hub library on the same day to avoid disparity on the type of books that go into each school. We discovered that some schools did not get dictionaries in Jinja while each school was expected to get a dictionary.

Bulk lending service to schools.

Not all the school utilised the bulk lending service available at their hub libraries. For those who did, they found the project’s plastics boxes very useful to fetch books from the hub libraries. In some cases, the schools were not aware of the service. In other cases such as Mbale, the hub library did not have clear guidelines on how schools could access the bulk lending services. Further, some libraries like Masaka Public Library gave out very few books (about 50) for a very short duration (one week). It has been recommended that they could consider lending between 100-200 books for a month to the schools to allow the books to circulate among the learners and teachers. There is need to popularise the bulk lending service of the hub libraries. This would enable schools to keep their book stock refreshed using the books available in the hub libraries’ Children’s Corners.

Parental support is key to project sustainability.

It is important to work closely with parents in order to solicit their support for school libraries as well as in helping their children read at home. This outreach to parents could be added to hub librarians’ work in collaboration with schools.
7.0 Recommendations

Monitoring and Evaluation of project outcomes in schools.

We need to re-evaluate the role of teachers and librarians in collecting and keeping monitoring data. A key weakness could also be how the hub librarians trained the teachers on keeping the necessary records during the teacher’s training. Some of the monitoring could be taken on by hub librarians. For instance, the Pupils Progress Tracker could be handled by the hub librarians working in partnership with teachers in each school to collect data from selected pupils at various intervals. This will lessen the burden on the teacher and ensure that the data is collected and kept properly.

Book distribution to hub libraries and schools.

There is need for the streamlining of the book distribution at NLU’s Kampala offices as well as at each of the hub level to avoid unequal division of the books among hub libraries and the schools. A distribution list should be developed between Book Aid International and NLU in order to provide clarity on what books go where.

School outreach programme.

Hub librarians should aggressively market their children sections to local schools through the schools outreach programme. They should take samples of books with them whenever they are visiting schools. Further, the hub libraries need to strengthen their bulk lending services to schools so that schools can borrow an adequate numbers of books e.g. between 100-200 (if not more) per school for a period of about a month to allow children to read the books and exchange them among themselves. Book Aid International should also consider strengthening the bulk borrowing schemes of hub libraries through provision of more books to hub libraries.

Patronage of Children’s Corners.

There is a need to encourage schools to send their pupils to visit the Children’s Corners in their hub libraries. Hub librarians should market this to the schools and even allow them to bring in school parties to the library so that the pupils can discover the resources available in the Children’s Corners. Head teachers and teachers should be encouraged to make frequent visits to the hub libraries so that they are aware of the resources available. Schools should also encourage children (and their parents) to patronise the Children’s Corners of the hub libraries especially during holidays and at the weekend (where they are open). Some pupils are unable to visit their local library at the weekend as it is closed. Hub libraries should be encouraged to find ways of opening over the weekend for some hours.

Mid-term evaluation.

In a system where there is no direct control of public libraries such as NLU, it is recommended that a budget for a mid-term evaluation by an NLU staff member be provided. Some of the challenges such as incomplete record keeping and unequal books distribution would have been noted and corrected in good time if an NLU programme manager had been involved during the
mid-term evaluation. Mid-term visits are important for technical support to hub librarians and the schools. This project did not facilitate for that.

**Increase budget to enable librarians to make increased visits to schools.**

It is recommended that an increased budget is provided to enable hub librarians to follow up with schools and support teachers more frequently. This would be especially helpful for those schools further from the hub library.

**Increase time for library access in schools.**

Schools should be encouraged to consider employing a dedicated library staff member (where they can) who can work under the supervision of the teacher-librarians to ensure that library services are provided in the school unhindered.

**Librarian and teacher training.**

There is need to consider a one-day lessons-learned and refresher workshop at two levels. At a national level for librarians and at local level for teachers and head teachers. This would assist in sharing best practices and lesson learned from the various hub libraries and schools. This would enhance project sustainability in the future as participants learn from each other and from facilitators.

**Closer working with Municipal Councils.**

Librarians should seize available opportunities to demonstrate their usefulness by working closely with other departments such as the Department of Education in supporting the establishment and management of schools libraries.

*Compiled by: James Njuguna Kimani, Africa Representative, Book Aid International. October 2018.*