SCHOOL LIBRARIES: CENTRE OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
ORION MONT-AUX-SOURCES HOTEL
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GET: Children and Youth Literacy Directorate
Various terms are used to describe the school library. These include library room, media centre, resource centre, information centre or library media centre. All of these terms are used to describe a place where activities are related to the acquisition, classification, cataloguing, processing, storage and circulation of learning and teaching resources for use by learners, teachers and school management.

Traditionally school libraries are regarded, by virtue of their operating systems, as discrete units within a school - sometimes even an institution within the school institution. However, as early as 1945 the American Library Association cast the school library as a teaching method (Vermeulen, 1994:148).

Although this perspective was formulated more than 50 years ago, it is surprisingly and refreshingly relevant to the outcomes-based curriculum being introduced in South African schools. By exploring the unusual notion of the school library as teaching method, new approaches to school library provision begin to emerge.

The school library exists to:
- Support the school curriculum by providing suitable, relevant, and interesting range of reading material and reference books
- Ensure the organization of books for easy access
- Encourage independent learning
- Act as an information point for enquires and facilitate the lending and retrieval of books
- Promote and facilitate recreational reading in a conducive atmosphere.
PURPOSE OF THE PRESENTATION

- Contextualisation;
- To provide a definition of School library;
- To provide an overview of the importance and value of School Libraries in Education;
- To highlight literacy intervention programmes to improve literacy teaching in schools:
  - National Reading Strategy
  - Ithuba Writing Project
  - 100 Storybooks project
  - Drop all and read campaign
  - Foundation Phase Writing project
  - Mobile Library in Education project
In 2004, the Minister of Education indicated in her budget speech the priority of improving reading and writing skills and ensuring that South African learners can read fluently by the third Grade.

In the DoE Strategic Plan 2007-2011, the Minister stated that ... a concerted effort will be made to improve the quality of schooling through a substantial increase in resource ... more schools will be provided with libraries and science laboratories to improve on reading, writing and numeracy skills from Grade R to Grade 12, especially in township and rural areas.

To realize the Minister’s mandate, the General Education and Training Branch established a literacy promotion and development directorate to deepen its focus on, amongst other things, improving literacy and numeracy levels in schools with sharp focus on Foundation Phase learners.

The primary objective of the Children and Youth Literacy development directorate is to increase young learners’ reading, writing and numeracy skills with a special focus on those from previously disadvantaged backgrounds.
The vision of the Department of Education is of schools that have well resourced and functioning school libraries which will support the teaching of the curriculum and contribute towards ensuring that all learners and teachers are information literate and independent lifelong library users and readers.

The Department of Education also aims to foster the sustained and effective development, resourcing, management and integrated use of libraries in schools throughout South Africa.

Fundamental to all learning is the ability to read with fluency and comprehension. The National Library Policy is intended first and foremost to provide learners with access to a wide range of written material intended to improve literacy levels so that learners are able to read for enjoyment and to access the curriculum.
The National Curriculum Statement aims at the development of a high level of knowledge and skills for all and holds high expectations of what South African learners can achieve, especially those who were previously disempowered by the lack of knowledge and skills. The school library has a critical role to play in developing high levels so that learners are able to read for enjoyment and to access the curriculum.

The National Curriculum Statement emphasises that learners must be actively involved in the learning process. Active learning does not happen in a classroom where the teacher and the textbook are the only sources of information.

It requires that learners must interact with a wide range of learning resources when preparing their information-based assignments. Teachers also need to interact with a wide range of learning and teaching resources when preparing their lessons or learning programmes and setting tasks which require learners to engage with these learning and teaching resources.
The IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto entitled “the school library in teaching and learning for all” was published in 2000.

The manifesto states:

- Governments, through their ministries responsible for education, are urged to develop strategies, policies and plans that implement the principles of this Manifesto.

- This mandate has been produced to inform decision makers at national and local levels around the world, and to give support and guidance to the library community. They have been written to help schools to implement the principles expressed in the manifesto.
**“The school library in teaching and learning for all”**

**Mission**
- The school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in our increasingly information- and knowledge-based present day society. The school library equips learners with lifelong learning skills and develops their imagination, thereby enabling them to live as responsible citizens.

**Policy**
- The school library should be managed within a clearly structured policy framework. The library policy should be devised bearing in mind the overarching policies and needs of the school and should reflect its ethos, aims and objectives as well as its reality. The policy will specify when, where, for whom and by whom the full potential of the library will be realised.
- The library policy will become feasible if the whole school community supports and contributes to the aims and objectives set out in the policy. Therefore it should be written with as much involvement as viable, with as much consultation as practicable, and it should be as widely shared as possible in its printed form.
The National Information Management Systems in 2007 provided the statistical information on researching school libraries.

This information suggests that there has been little change in respect of the provision of libraries at schools.

The National Systemic Evaluations which were conducted in 2001 and 2004 to establish literacy and numeracy levels in our primary schools revealed that our learners were reading far below their expected grade levels. The reasons for this include each of access to books in homes, school, and community.

Below is a table showing number of schools that have school libraries that are stocked and unstocked.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>&quot;Operational&quot; ordinary public schools assessed</th>
<th>Schools with no library space</th>
<th>Schools with library space that are reportedly not stocked</th>
<th>Schools with library space that are reportedly stocked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sum (1-3) (1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Cape</td>
<td>5,724</td>
<td>5,179</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F State</td>
<td>1,717</td>
<td>1,290</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>1,972</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KZN</td>
<td>5,823</td>
<td>4,635</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td>4,037</td>
<td>3,742</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>1,975</td>
<td>1,662</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Cape</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N West</td>
<td>1,788</td>
<td>1,444</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Cape</td>
<td>1,474</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 2006</td>
<td>25,130</td>
<td>19,912</td>
<td>3,391</td>
<td>1,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 2006</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>79.24%</td>
<td>13.49%</td>
<td>7.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 2000</td>
<td>27,209</td>
<td>22,101</td>
<td>5,108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 2000</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>81.23%</td>
<td>18.77%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% change since 2000</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-1.99%</td>
<td>1.99%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 1996</td>
<td>26,673</td>
<td>21,907</td>
<td>4,766</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 1996</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>82.13%</td>
<td>17.87%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% change since 1996</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-2.89%</td>
<td>2.89%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The National School Library policy foregrounds the following mandate:

- A National School Library Policy that is implemented at all public schools, i.e. all public schools should have functioning and well resourced centralised libraries.

- Although the National School library policy advocates for a centralised library in each school, it recognises the use of interim Library structures such as classroom libraries, book collection/book corners, mobile libraries, cluster libraries, community libraries as a developing strategy leading us to the ideal “Centralised Library” per school.

- An allocation of at least 10% of the LTSM budget to purchase library resources, including a computerised administrative system for the library.

- Establishment of relevant structures at National, Provincial and school, to formulate, develop, coordinate, support, monitor, evaluate and ensure the implementation of the National School Library Policy.

- The policy and guidelines are undergoing approval process and planned to be distributed to schools and relevant stakeholders in 2008.
In 2005/2006, the Department of Arts and Culture commissioned KPMG to investigate library funding models and status quo of libraries in South Africa. The Department of Finance has allocated approximately R 1 billion funding for library development in three years (2007/2008-2009/2010)

The MTEF allocation is divided as follows:

- 2008/2009 – R 360 million
- 2009/2010 – R 490 million

GOALS, PURPOSE AND IMPACT OF THE CONDITIONAL GRANT

- To enable the South African society to gain access to knowledge and information that will improve their social, economic and political situation.
- To have transformed urban and rural community library infrastructure, facilities, and services through a recapitalized programme at national, provincial and local government level.
- Increase opportunities for life long learning and social development to all communities by providing access to a free, equitable and sustainable library information.
SOLUTION: PARTNERSHIP WITH DAC

**SELIENT FEATURES OF THE BUSINESS PLANS OR FOCUS AREAS FOR FUNDING**

- **Infrastructural development**, i.e. building new libraries and procurement of container/mobile box library in needy areas.
- **Capacity building and development** – Recruitment and training of more staff for deployment in new community libraries based needy areas such as rural community libraries.
- **Upgrading of libraries** – face-lift existing libraries (re-paint; extend or total renovation of the structure)
- **Resourcing libraries** – purchase modern and dated library reference and fiction materials, including indigenous languages materials and specialized stationery
- **Improve ICT infrastructure** – IT administration, cataloguing and retrieval systems
- **Management** – appointment of project managers and sign service level agreement with Municipalities
- **Monitoring and Evaluation** of programmes
- **Literacy promotion programmes** – targeting schools and community members
- **Marketing** - library promotion programme and celebration of calendar literacy days
- **Extension of library** services to rural areas through mobile libraries/depots
- **Improve provision of library equipments** and furnisher provided
DOE REPRESENTED IN NCLIS AND TECHNICAL TEAM TO DEVELOP THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION TRANSFORMATION CHARTER

PARTICIPATION IN THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION TRANSFORMATION CHARTER PUBLIC CONSULTATION
The main goal of this National Reading Strategy is to improve the reading competence of learners including those who experience barriers to learning and those learners who are at special schools and youth care centres.

The National Reading Strategy builds on six key pillars, namely:

- Monitoring learner assessment (baseline and post reading assessment)
- Teaching practice and methodology
- Teacher training, development and support
- Management of the teaching of reading
- Resources
- Research, partnerships and advocacy

The strategy will be distributed to schools and all relevant stakeholders by 2008 and in *Thutong* - Education website.
The 100 Storybooks Project is one of the projects developed to fulfill the Minister’s directive to provide packs containing 100 storybooks to each Foundation and Intermediate Phase classrooms to create classroom libraries.

The project targets 19,428 primary, but using Quintile 1, 2 and 3 primary schools in the 14 priority districts as a starting point. Its timeframe is 2005/2006-2009/2010.

In 2005/2006, 5,233 quintile 1, 2 and 3 primary schools located in Nodal areas were each provided with 3 packs containing 100 storybooks and bookshelves for Grade 1–3. The total budget spent for the project was R 35 million.

In 2006/2007, 3,436 quintiles 1 primary schools in 14 priority districts as part of the QIDS-UP programme received packs containing the 100 storybooks and bookshelves. The budget was R 59.1 million.

In 2007/2008, the project provided 678 (Q2) and 460 (Q3), i.e. 1,138 primary schools located in 14 priority districts with similar packs and bookshelves. Additional 405 quintile 1 primary schools was also added to increase number of beneficiaries.
The Minister of Education launched the Drop All and Read Campaign on Wednesday 17, January 2007 at B J Myanda primary school at Kwa-Zakhele, Port Elizabeth – Eastern Cape Province.

Drop all and Read is national reading awareness campaign to promote the importance and value of reading in schools and beyond.

Schools are encouraged to set time aside for learners, teachers and school management to "drop everything and read." This time should be indicated on the class timetable.

This time is supposed to be fun! not another academic exercise. The Department will use the campaign to further profile its activities of literacy promotion through provision of reading gifts, i.e. 2 storybooks and a bag to all Grade R and Grade 1 learners.

Last year the campaign targeted 7 000 learners (3 500 Gr R and 3500 Grade 1) in 14 priority districts (5 primary schools per district)
In June 2002, United States President George W. Bush announced his commitment to improve Africa’s education through the Africa Education Initiative. President Bush pledged $200 million over five years to address the educational needs of sub-Saharan Africa.

The Africa Education Initiative (AEI) initially focused on three primary activities: girls’ scholarships, teacher training, and learning materials development. The Textbooks and Learning Materials Program (TLMP) is a component of the AEI, focusing on materials development.

The Department of Education has embarked on a partnership project with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the University of Texas at San Antonio to produce learning materials in all the official languages.

The project is currently underway in three provinces (MP, GP and LP) where Intermediate Phase teachers from 120 pilot schools are authoring the books. In South Africa the project is named “IUTHUA Writing Project.” Loosely translated, ithuba means “opportunities” in IsiZulu, as it has been recognized that the project will offer opportunities to teachers and learners in the use of the technology and also in the process through which the learning materials will be created. “Ithuba” will also represent the English acronym: Innovative Texts in Home language uniquely Based in Africa.

The project will develop 120 stories and print 2.3 million high-quality, cost-effective storybooks, written in all official languages of South Africa, by the March 2009. Targeted number of schools is 2 000

The materials are developed for use in the Intermediate Phase for language development and also as resources for Maths, Social Science and Life Orientation.

600 000 will be distributed to the identified schools by September 2008

The project budget is $ 5 million
The Mobile Library in Education project is a national partnership project between the DoE and South African Primary Education Support Initiative (SAPESI) to deploy 30 mobile buses to all the nine (9) provinces of South Africa by 2007 and additional 50 buses by 2010.

The mobile library service evaluation reports from Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal and Western Cape provinces indicate that the vehicles are playing a very important role in schools and communities that have no access to public or community library service.

Based on the success of the project in the three provinces, the Japanese municipalities through SAPESI resolved to make a donation of 30 mobile library buses to South Africa.

The Department of Education and SAPESI have distributed 21 mobile libraries in Gauteng, Western Cape, KZN and Free State.

This year (2008/9) the focus is to deploy 50 buses to all provinces, stating with new 5 provinces.
MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- At the moment, we closely work with service providers to submit PoDs that are signed by schools representatives and we contact schools telephone to confirmation receipt of materials.

- Questionnaires were sent to participating schools to confirm delivery and also usage of the materials.

- The directorate will conduct school visits

- In addition, we are establishing the Literacy coordinators in all provinces to assist with implementation, support, monitoring and evaluation.

- Establishing systems and tools for monitoring and evaluation

- External evaluation
CONCLUSION

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