
Towards a school library development policy for Uganda

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Keywords

School libraries, Uganda, Design and development

Abstract

This paper is based on a literature review and aims at providing guidelines for a school library development policy for Uganda. It presents the need for school libraries, describes the background to the policy formulation process, and analyses the existing legal and institutional framework for school libraries in Uganda. The paper highlights the current initiatives in support of school library development in Uganda and gives justification for a school library development policy for Uganda. Guidelines and implementation strategies are given to guide the formulation of this school library development policy.

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Introduction

A right to education implies a right to access information. Libraries and other related information services are crucial in educational development because the information they hold is an essential tool with which to foster the learning process. More broadly, one of the national objectives of the Government of Uganda is to afford every citizen equal opportunity to attain the highest standard of life possible, as stated in the *Constitution of the Republic of Uganda* (Government of Uganda, 1995, p. 6). Similarly, the White Paper on the Education Policy Review Commission report (Government of Uganda, 1992) provides for the:

- promotion of scientific, technical and cultural knowledge, the skills and attitudes needed to promote development; and
- eradication of illiteracy and the equipping of the individual with basic skills and knowledge to exploit their environment for self-development as well as national development for continued learning.

It also makes provision for developing the ability to use data and information for decision making. While the government recognises education as a key component of Uganda's Poverty Eradication Strategy, it also notes that literacy levels are very low (65 per cent) (Government of Uganda, 2001, p. 116). To address this problem, the Government's Strategic Investment Plan aims at improving considerably the quality of education in the country (Government of Uganda, 1998a, p. 5).

A variety of efforts have already been made to improve the quality of education in Uganda. Quality primary education provides an indispensable base for all forms of advanced education and sustainable development. With the introduction of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme in Uganda in 1997, by 2001 school enrolment stood at 6,519,543 (MOES, 2001). The major programmes under UPE include (among others) classroom construction/completion, recruitment of teachers, and supply of instructional materials (Bitamazire, 2001, p. 2). The Ugandan Government now spends about eight million US dollars on textbooks and over one million dollars on supplementary reading materials a year. All government-aided primary schools under the UPE programme receive a percent of the total UPE grant for buying scholastic and

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supplementary reading materials (Bitamazire, 2001).

The Government also introduced comprehensive secondary education in 2001, a system in which secondary schools are supposed to offer a curriculum of around 20 subjects (Onek, 2001). All these developments will affect the education system in the country and the services provided to support it, among which are libraries.

In spite of these initiatives, the education system in Uganda has been characterised by high levels of illiteracy, lack of good reading habits, poor academic performance, examination malpractice and poor teacher to student ratios. In a study conducted by the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB, 2000), out of 361,150 that completed the primary cycle in 1999, only 13 per cent were adequately literate. This was attributed to poor public policy and institutional management practice, lack of essential resources for literacy development, failure to recognise reading as an essential critical skill for learning, a lack of commitment to ensure that literacy is achieved, and a lack of reading policies in schools. Further, the study noted that resource allocation concentrated on textbooks, without balancing the needs for non-text book reading materials, which are fundamental to literacy practice and consolidation (UNEB, 2000).

In a comparative study conducted by Lutaaya (1999, p. 36), it was shown that schools with libraries perform better than those schools with no libraries. This study of two schools showed that in one particular school with a library, the following annual proportions of its candidates passed in division one at O-level: 69.3 per cent (1995), 81.2 (1996), 68.12 (1997) and 77.1 (1998). In the school without a library, the proportions were 10.7 per cent (1995), 21.5 per cent (1996), 35.1 per cent (1997) and 60.7 per cent (1998). The improvement in 1998 was attributed to the increased number of books available to students for reading in that one year. Lutaaya concluded that school libraries therefore did have an impact on the academic performance of learners/students.

The need for school libraries

A sound education is facilitated by a good library. Ranganathan, as interpreted by Ambili (1994, p. 29), noted that libraries have the power to produce "material happiness, mental joy, and spiritual delight". They are social institutions charged with the duty of providing the means for practical self-education of one and all. Ambili (1994) further describes the functions of school library as being:

- to acquire and display books and non-book materials for reading;
- to make the library an agency for curricular enrichment, pupil exploration, and dissemination of information;
- to facilitate the instructional program for teachers;
- to instill love for books and libraries in children as their companions in leisure;
- to stimulate reading habits in students/pupils;
- to teach the art of skilful use of books, non-book materials and sophisticated library;
- to cooperate with other libraries, agencies and community leaders in planning, and developing an overall library programme for every community or area; and
- where public libraries are not in existence, to function as a distance learning/education study centre.

Similarly, Ijari (1994, p. 52) describes the objectives of school libraries as:

- to provide a wider and deeper understanding of various disciplines in the school;
- to promote the reading habit among the young generation;
- to eradicate illiteracy;
- to initiate career development among youth;
- to ensure democratic values;
- to encourage creative thinking among school children;
- to improve the economic conditions of society; and
- to ensure philosophical and social values in the community.

Ambili's and Ijari's observations reflect the words of Fargo (reviewed by Humayoon, 1994) that the objective of the school library is "to capture and hold the interest of the children's reading, to make children active and intelligent users of all sorts of books both for pleasure reading and for research, and to cultivate in them an appreciation of libraries as social institutions". Four roles of the school library in the school environment emerge: to support learning programmes; to support teaching programmes, and research; to act as information centres; and to provide recreational and professional development. The American Association of School Librarians as reviewed by Humayoon (1994) endorsed the need for a school library in these words: To serve to meet the needs of pupils, teachers and community, provide library materials and services appropriate to them, [and] stimulate and guide students in all aspects of reading; to help students develop helpful interests and acquire desirable social attitudes, help students/pupils become skilful users of libraries. The International Federation of Library

Associations and Institutions (IFLA) endorses the importance of school libraries and has formulated a School Library Manifesto, ratified by Unesco stating that, "The school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today's information and knowledge based society. The School library equips students with life-long learning skills and develops their imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens" (IFLA, 2000 p. 1).

It should be noted that education in this age of information, cannot be classroom-centred but has to be child/learner-centred, which in turn requires a resource- and library-centred approach in order to develop a culture of reading. Such an approach can only be achieved if libraries are suitably equipped, staffed, and monitored effectively. This calls for a purposeful library policy, which will be an investment in the country's future progress.

In 1989 the third EPR Commission (Education Policy Review Commission, 1989, p. 58) pointed out one of the objectives of secondary education as "enabling individuals to develop personal skills of problem-solving, information-gathering, interpretation, independent reading ...". The Government White Paper in response to the EPRC report in 1992 realised the need to "address the question of school and public libraries which are important in the processes of universalisation, vocationalisation, expansion and democratisation of education" (Government of Uganda, 1992). It also pointed out that "the present state of libraries in educational institutions was pathetic – either there are no facilities at all or where they exist they (especially books) are out-of-date" (Government of Uganda, 1992, p. 25).

Some of the tasks the Ministry of Education and Sports has committed itself to undertake in order to rectify this situation are to:

- Prepare a list of, and information guides on, the minimum facilities and equipment needed in educational institutions, especially, primary and secondary schools, of different sizes.
- Determine the basic library requirement for educational institutions, and to ensure that the libraries are adequately strengthened not only for the students but also for use by the new literate and other people in the community, especially in rural areas.
- Improve the quality of education at all levels (Government of Uganda, 1992, pp. 26-9).

Such attempts to develop school libraries require a framework in which they can operate. Sometimes library systems are based on a School Central Library model, a Class Library model or a Subject Library model. However, with the overlapping of the boundaries of subjects and the advent of information and communication technologies

(ICTs), centralised systems are more practical and useful. The following are the models of school library provision from which individual school communities can make a choice depending on their particular information needs and infrastructure (Centre for Educational Technology and Distance Education, Department of Education, 1997):

- One school one library.
- One classroom one library.
- One cluster one library.
- One community one library (e.g. the multi-purpose or joint-use model implemented in Sweden and Australia).
- One region one library service (e.g. the regionalised delivery model of Birmingham).
- One learner one library (e.g. the virtual library model).
- One lifelong learner one library (e.g. the community learning centre model).

All these models can and should be integrated as appropriate to develop a school library model for Uganda that is co-ordinated through existing government arms, functions and activities in the education sector. Isingoma (1995), a former senior inspector of schools, in fact suggests the co-ordination of all educational resources, particularly school level resources through the maintenance of comprehensive databases, the production of catalogues, provision of information services, and administration of collections. But this co-ordination requires a policy to guide its implementation country-wide.

Statement of problem

Currently, some schools do at least maintain libraries or have rooms set aside for housing books. But few of them have qualified librarians, while others have a teacher responsible for library matters. In some schools, books are just kept in boxes in offices. Even where libraries exist, many times the so-called library buildings are used for meetings, seminars and other school functions. In cases where there are qualified librarians, the School Management Committee/Board of Governors or Parent Teacher Association employs them on local terms and these terms are not clearly defined. Not only has this brought job insecurity, but also a lack of commitment, and an absence of any code of conduct to monitor the professional ethics of staff. The funding of libraries is similarly not clearly defined. There are no clearly articulated standards for management of library resources, library building, personnel, stock, resource sharing and co-operation.

The former Inspectorate department that used to be charged with the management of libraries has been transferred to the Educational Standards Agency (ESA). Although the ESA is a custodian for educational standards, it only emphasises monitoring, inspection, supervision, and advice on teaching profession matters (Khiddu, 2000, p. 37). This leaves library standards unprovided for. Their current mandate does not allow for the implementation of policy initiatives over and above the administration of the status quo.

Accordingly, the management of school library matters has no *locus* in the education sector structure. The department with a library-related function in the Ministry of Education and Sport fulfils the role of an internal resource centre, and only caters for information materials within the MOES. The resource centre has no mandate in the development of school libraries in the country at large. Even then, if it were so enabled, there are no standards provided for the management and co-ordination of library and information services in the education sector in Uganda. There is therefore a need for a policy to stipulate both the standards and implementation strategy for management of school libraries in Uganda.

The current state of school library policy in Uganda

Background to the policy formulation process

Uganda's School Library Development Plans and Programmes can be traced as far back as 1963 in the Castle Report of the Uganda Educational Commission (Ministry of Education, 1963, p. 26). Chaired by one E.B. Castle, the Commission recognised the importance of school libraries in Uganda. It observed that, "Another valuable means of deepening and broadening studies in secondary schools is to encourage general reading". It recommended special attention to be paid to the organisation of school libraries, which should be placed in the charge of suitably qualified teacher-librarians, trained in the basic principles of library management. This report recommended proper management of school libraries, inclusion of qualified staff and maintenance of a regular budget for the School Library, based on up to 5 per cent of the total school fees collection (Isingoma, 1996, p. 1).

In 1977, a Standing Committee of Public libraries board set up a subcommittee to investigate the state of libraries for schools and colleges and to recommend possible areas for co-operation with the Ministry of Education with regard to libraries in schools and colleges. It was observed that most secondary schools and colleges

had libraries, which fell below the appropriate level of usefulness required by the staff and pupils for whom they were set up. It was further noted that there was nobody responsible for organising and directing the running of these libraries at the Ministry's headquarters. Those schools that did have libraries were managed by teachers who combined their teaching with library work, assisted by pupils. They created their own *ad hoc* library systems. Allocation and utilisation of funds for libraries were up to the school concerned. It was further observed that there was no collection management policy to guide the acquisition of stock for school libraries. The study recommended recruitment of a qualified Librarian into the Ministry of Education at the level of Inspector of Schools specifically to be in charge of school and college libraries. It was also recommended that 7-10 per cent of the annual current school revenues be allocated to cater for annual library growth and investment. It was also recommended that every province should establish a model school library, and library studies should be incorporated in teacher training college programmes.

In the late 1970s, Unesco (1978, p. 63) carried out a one-month study on the development of school libraries in Uganda which achieved a fair understanding of and sympathy for Uganda's educational problems at that time. It expressed a serious need for improving the quality of education through adequate school library provision. The report also advocated the setting up of a special department of school library services within the then Ministry of Education, together with the appointment of special inspectors for school libraries and reiterated the need for the establishment of a model school library system (Isingoma, 1996).

The MOE Library Committee based at the Ministry headquarters, which was established in 1975 was revived in 1993. This committee provided the nucleus for development of an appropriate central authority for school libraries in Uganda. The Deputy Commissioner for Education (Inspectorate) with the Assistant Commissioner for Education (Secondary) were chairs. It had broad membership including representatives from MOES headquarters staff, the East African School of Librarianship (EASL), the Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo, and school and college library associations. The committee could co-opt other persons as need arose (Isingoma, 1996, p. 3). The committee aimed at generating a self-sustaining model of library service development in all schools in Uganda. This model included the functions of: organising centralised services for school libraries and teacher's resource centers in the country and

providing opportunity for co-operation between MOES Library staff and other professional librarians in Uganda.

The MOE first issued a School Library Inspection Checklist at Lweza in March, 1994 (Ministry of Education, 1994). It was initially developed as a guide to school inspectors in making detailed reports on school libraries. It also became a useful guide to writing up school library annual/termly reports and to drawing up individual school library action plans (Isingoma, 1996). The guide provides a checklist on administration, building, opening hours, book stock, classification system, catalogue, control desk, furniture, cleanliness, and extension services.

In 1995, the East African School of Librarianship with the support of the German Foundation for International Development (DSE) and the MOES organised a seminar to design a School Library Policy for Uganda and recommended ways and means of improving School Libraries. The participants recognised the:

- social, cultural and educational value of the school library;
- role of the school library in promotion of reading habits; and
- contribution of the school library in enhancement of the quality of education.

Participants at this seminar proposed a school library policy that was recommended to the Ministry to study and adopt. Other recommendations from the seminar included:

- encouragement and support of writing and production of relevant reading materials for schools;
- incorporating library studies into the curricula at the teacher training colleges;
- establishing positions of school librarians and support staff in every school;
- introduction of innovative programmes to promote reading habits among school children as part of the school activities;
- incorporating a course on school library organisation in the Bachelor of Library and Information Science undergraduate degree curriculum;
- establishing school library standards; and
- establishing a school library association as an affiliate to the Uganda Library Association.

As a result of the dynamic partnership between the Ministry of Education, the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) and the British Council (British Council, 1996, p. iii) in furtherance of country training programmes on school library education, the Uganda School Library Manual was developed. The manual was compiled to publish materials originally developed at training

workshops for school library staff, and to give guidance on how to implement library technical and administrative duties.

At its general conference in November 1999, Unesco approved the school library manifesto prepared by IFLA. The manifesto recognised the school library as fundamental to success in today's society, a society which is increasingly information- and knowledge-based. It further acknowledged that the school library equips students with lifelong learning skills and develops their imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens. The manifesto highlighted the mission of the school library, funding issues, setting goals for the school library, and staffing, management and operational issue. It urged governments through their education ministries to develop strategies, policies and plans that implemented the principles of this manifesto (IFLA, 2000). Unesco's recommendations are a valuable support to Uganda's ongoing process of policy formulation.

In its strategic plan, the Uganda Library Association (ULA, 2000a, p. 16) recognised the need for a policy framework and formed a Legal and Policy Advocacy Committee to foster the legislation of Library and Information Services in Uganda. In its 1st Annual Library and Information Science Conference for Uganda (ULA, 2000b), on the theme "Building an Information Driven Economy", the committee presented the proposed guidelines for school library policy. The concerns of the guidelines focused on the management structure, staffing, library budget provisions, and library standards. The conference recommended that Uganda Library Association should submit proposals to the Ministry of Education (ULA, 2000b, p. 101). Following these recommendations, on 2 July 2001, ULA wrote a letter to the Ministry of Education and Sports with the School Library Policy Proposal for Uganda and the Unesco/IFLA School Library manifesto attached. In its reaction dated 30 July 2001, the Ministry promised that a policy would be developed at MOES (Onek, 2001, p. 2). As a result, the Ministry set up a technical working committee on school library provision/policy to brainstorm and propose the way forward with regard to the future of a MOES school library policy. The composition of the Committee now comprises ten members from the Ministry, and representatives from the Public Libraries Board, EASLIS, and the ULA (Onek, 2002).

Existing legal and institutional framework for school libraries in Uganda

The Government of Uganda recognises the importance of school libraries and pledges to provide library facilities throughout the country.

The Ministry of Education and Sports is charged with the responsibility of supporting its institutions in such a way that they can provide adequate and effective library services not only to students in those institutions but also where feasible to the wider communities around those institutions (Government of Uganda, 1992). The Government recommends that at least one central bookbinding facility should be established to support the library system. It further endorses the main guiding principles provided by the Education Policy Review Commission – improving the quality of education at all levels and gearing up of education to the achievement of national goals of development especially those of bringing about national integration and rapid social economic development. One of the aims in Uganda's *Vision 2025* is a well-educated society with a high quality of life (Government of Uganda, 1998b, c). One of the strategies for attaining this vision is to develop and utilise information systems and services effectively. The Communication and Information for Development White paper (Government of Uganda, 1999, p. 18) recognises libraries as important channels for the communication of development information. With an increase in their numbers, and a diversification of the services which they provide, libraries can become a convenient one-stop gateway for all such information utilisation.

According to the Universal Primary Education guidelines, capitation grants to primary schools are spent as follows: 50 per cent on instructional materials for all subjects taught, 30 per cent on co-curricular activities, 15 per cent on school management and 5 per cent on administration. Although it provides for "instructional materials", the provision for "library resources" is not defined. In order to achieve quality improvement in primary schools, the Ministry endeavours to achieve universal access to textbooks for Primary 1 to Primary 7 on a one book to one pupil basis in 2003 (Government of Uganda, 1998a, p. 10). It provides indicative targets as:

- formulating a comprehensive universal primary education textbook plan (1998-2003);
- implementation of textbook procurement and supply;
- ensuring sustainable textbook access; and
- implementation of universal primary education textbook utilisation training for all primary teachers.

Currently the Ministry of Education and Sports ensures that necessary resources on learning are made available to Uganda primary schools through its policy on the provision of school textbooks

(MOES, 1999, p. 11). It provides core textbooks, teachers' guides, and reference materials.

These indicators were a reflection of the National Textbook Policy Review Committee set up in 1997 to address issues pertaining to the procurement, provision/distribution and utilisation of books especially in primary schools (BODECU, 1999, p. 1). The National Textbook Policy for Uganda provides policy guidelines for textbooks and other instructional materials, both local and imported, for the financing and distribution of school textbooks, on authorship, printing and publishing, copyright, and promotion and co-operation strategies among stakeholders (BODECU, 1999).

The Constitution of Uganda empowers the Education Service Commission to appoint persons to hold or act in any office in the education service, including the powers to confirm such appointments (Government of Uganda, 1995, p. 111). This is further enhanced by the Education Service Act (Government of Uganda, 1992), where the Commission has powers to review the terms and conditions of service, standing orders, training and qualifications of Public Service in the education service and matters connected to their management and welfare (Government of Uganda, 1992, Education Service Act 2002, Article 8 1(c)). The commission is also empowered to make regulations providing for the formulation of national standards in respect of qualifications, appointment, and staff development of public officers in the education service and the regulation of the manner in which the matters shall be referred to the District Service Commission and Vice-versa (Government of Uganda, 1992, Education Service Act 2002, Article 31 (a) and (d) p. 6). In the performance of its functions, the District Service Commission has conform to the standards established by the Public Service Commission for the public service generally in the Local Government Act 1997 (Government of Uganda, 1997; see Article 56 (8)).

From the above discussion, it is clear that there is no specific legislation concerning school library provision in Uganda. This has made parties interested in library development and promotion of reading in Uganda take on different initiatives. These would be better co-ordinated within the structure of a proper legislative framework.

Current initiatives for school library development in Uganda

The Book Development Council of Uganda with support of Unesco has drafted the National Book Policy for Uganda aimed at strengthening and facilitating the development of the book sector so as to effectively contribute to the social economic

and cultural development of the country. This draft policy recommends that the MOES formulate a policy on the use of books in the formal education institutions (BODECU, 2001). Although this draft recognises the need for books in schools, it is silent on the school library and its role in promoting effective access to books.

The Uganda Library Association is working towards integrating libraries and information services into the daily lives of Ugandans. In order to achieve this vision, the Association has organised a number of activities aimed at “naturing the culture” of reading in Uganda (ULA, 2002). It has organised reading camps in schools in various parts of Uganda (ULA, 2001a). This has attracted a lot of support from the communities around those schools. This is part of the East African Book Development Project under the umbrella of the National Book Trust of Uganda (NOBTU). The Book Development Project also aims at establishing school libraries in rural/slum primary schools countrywide and promotes training of teachers in the establishment and management of school libraries implemented by the Public Libraries Board and ULA (ULA, 2001b, p. 4). Under the same project, publishers organise annual national book weeks aiming at bringing books closer to the people. Seminars on readership development are also held on an annual basis.

The Public Libraries Board in collaboration with Unesco/International Development Research Centre has also taken measures to bring libraries and information centres closer to communities by establishing multi-purpose tele-centres in rural areas. However, these efforts are not co-ordinated, duplication of activities is likely to occur and such efforts may therefore fail to meet national objectives.

Justification for a school library development policy for Uganda

The importance of legislating in support of school library policy was emphasised by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions at its Seminar on School Librarianship at Caldes de Montbui, Spain, sponsored by Unesco, which declared its intentions as “to encourage national education authorities to develop a policy on the role of school libraries in national development, as part of their national education policy; [and] to introduce necessary legislation (Galler, 1996).

National policy making can provide a plan of action, a statement of aims and ideas. It should involve a framework for co-ordinating and

streamlining activities and operations by all actors concerned. Thus, a school library policy is required in order to guide and co-ordinate the operations of libraries in Uganda. There are many reasons why there is a need for one:

- To fulfil key constitutional provisions (article 41 (1) on the right of access to information and article 29(1(a)) on freedom of expression), there is a need for a procedure to obtain access to information (Government of Uganda, 1995).
- To develop and effectively utilise information systems and services in development - which is a strategic objective of Uganda Vision 2025 (Government of Uganda, 1998b, c) – it is desirable to develop a policy that addresses the issues of school libraries.
- To improve the quality of education at all levels, standards are required not only in teaching but also in library and information science.
- To ensure a co-ordinated and regulated approach to overall development of school libraries in the country, there is need for a defined institutional regulatory framework.
- In this information age, to deal with issues such as pornography, piracy, censorship, confidentiality, intellectual property rights, security of information and info-ethics, there is a need to regulate the flow of information, and information access and use in schools.
- There is need for the co-ordination of disparate initiatives by Government and its departments and agencies, by companies, by NGO’s and individuals all variously involved in the development of libraries and promotion of reading in the country. A policy framework will maximise resource allocation and utilisation.

These considerations demand action strategies to reinforce the effective use of libraries in schools. This is in line with the mission of the Ministry, which is “Improving the quality of education at all levels.” This policy will provide the Ministry with the necessary authority and commitment to promote the establishment of libraries in every school and/or shared library facilities in communities; and will also help to establish regular inspections of their facilities, organisation, staffing, funding, and maintenance.

Recommendations

Policy guidelines

Based on the above observations, the following policy guidelines are proposed for school library development:

- The vision of the school library policy should reflect the vision for education. For example, in Uganda, this vision can be summarised as “A Uganda where national development is enhanced through lifelong learning and information literate society capable of harnessing the environment around them”.
- The policy should aim at promoting the development, use and effective utilisation of library and information services for a sustainable quality of education and lifelong learning in Uganda. It should define the role of a school library, and should provide guiding principles (standards) and indicators for the setting up and management of school libraries in Uganda. The policy should also ensure effective human resources utilisation for proper management of Ugandan school libraries. The policy should provide guidelines for security, access, and use of information materials in schools in Uganda, and a co-ordinating mechanism for the sustainable development and utilisation of library and information services in schools in Uganda. The school library policy should be able to provide sustainable funding strategies for Library and Information services in Schools, and strategies for enhancing co-operation and collaboration among individuals, in tandem with local, national, and international initiatives.
- The policy should specify the functions of school library as defined in the IFLA/Unesco School Library Manifesto 2000, where it is stated that “The school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today’s information and knowledge society”. It should be able to support national educational goals, and provide access to local, national, regional, and global information resources. The school library should foster a culture of reading among learners, and develop and promote a positive attitude towards the use of libraries and information materials.
- The school library should also develop information literacy skills among learners, and ensure security of information materials and guard against violation of intellectual property rights. Emphasis should be placed on the cost-effective forms of providing library services such as book boxes, book cupboards/lockers, bookstores, reference services. A standard form of managing library resources needs to be promoted. The policy should specify which appropriate furniture, equipment, and ICT facilities are appropriate for library use.
- Issues of maintenance of a register of school librarians, qualifications for library staff who take charge of library services and the authority to appointment such staff need to be defined by the policy. It is important to define a strategy for continuous training for practising librarians to ensure performance improvement. The policy should specify the status of the institutions that are to carry out library training programmes – professional designations of library staff should be in conformity with training and qualifications obtained. The policy needs to specify the responsibilities of those in charge of the library, including collection development, acquisition and organisation of library stock, information and reference services, policy development and implementation, finance and budget control, guidance and promotion of library use, marketing library services, and ensuring security of library resources.

Policy implementation strategy

The study recommends a library committee in every school that shall be responsible for decision making affecting the school library. The district school library committee should take overall decisions that affect school libraries in the district including coordination of activities and resource-sharing, devising funding strategies, and maintaining of standards. There is a need for a “school library coordinating unit” to ensure proper implementation of policy. The Ministry should define the composition and functions of each.

For successful implementation of this policy, a unit in the Ministry of Education and Sports need to be identified to take on responsibility for school libraries. Training institutions in library and information science that have been designated as such according to agreed policy guidelines, should develop programmes and modules to train and re-train teachers and school librarians and communities in managing and use of the library. Strategies should be developed on monitoring, supervision, funding, and promotion of participation in libraries. To extend such participation, information literacy and library use skills need to be emphasised in schools and training institutions, and integrated into the work of the Education Standards Agency.

Finally, there should be continuous evaluation of the impact of this library policy on education, literacy, academic performance, and reading habits and resource utilisation. This means that a

strategy for sustainability and funding needs to be integral to the policy. In this way the Ministry of Education and Sport can work successfully with all stakeholders to promote advocacy of the policy, with a view to its full and successful implementation.

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