

# NEWSLETTER

## IBC UGANDA 2022

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Fountain House, Suite 5

Plot 55, Nkrumah Road, Kampala

Tel: 0773/0705-444416

info@literacyuganda.org



## The Oversight View in 2022



The Oversight Department in the Ideal Book Collection (IBC) program in Uganda takes on the role of supervisory, guidance, and follow-up of the project to ensure the achievement of planned goals with good value for the resources invested. In addition, the Department reviews and improves systems and processes, providing healthy relationships with our partners and other stakeholders.

We appreciate our partner government institutions, which include the Ministry of Education and Sports through the Basic Education Department and the National Curriculum

Development Center, that also contribute to the oversight role. Special appreciation goes to Room to Read and All the Sky Foundation for providing technical and financial support to drive the program.

In the year 2022, the crowning of the oversight work saw the Department host the State Minister for Primary Education, Dr. Joyce Moriku Kaducu, who officiated at the launch of the IBC libraries in Mitooma District. The trip by the Minister included visiting individual schools and observing the emerging libraries in Mitooma. The Minister could also listen to children read exciting stories from books.

The preparation of the instructional materials development provided another platform for follow-up in schools. Mr. Titus Kazungu from Room to Read joined the IBC team and traveled to Mubende and Mitooma districts visiting selected schools to see how lesson planning and teaching are conducted. The valuable insights gained have provided a platform to further supplement Government efforts in developing more materials for our learners.

During the year, the Oversight Department team made several visits to the IBC schools. The information gathered has informed future decisions.

While challenges still exist in some schools, including a need for more space and shelves and improper book storage in the libraries, more significant gains have been achieved in most areas, and there is fertile ground to take literacy to another level in our country.

We appreciate all the schools that have improved their libraries and book care management, allowing pupils to interact with these books frequently and freely.

**Harrison Kiggundu,**  
Chairperson Reading Association  
of Uganda and Team Lead, IBC  
Uganda

## A Bottom-up Literacy Programming Approach

“One special thing about the Ideal Book Collection (IBC) Uganda Project is that it is a bottom-up approach. The program empowers the implementors and makes them the point of focus and not the policy makers,” remarked an official of the Ministry of Education and Sports in her address to Mubende District leaders.

Whereas it is easy to think that a program implemented through authorities is likely to be accepted, impactful, and owned by the grassroots implementors, we have learned some modest lessons on our short journey so far that implementors are likely to hold programs that are implemented with them as the focal point and the fulcrum of the operation.

IB Uganda does just that. The teacher, the grassroots implementor, is the focal point for the implementation. For example, in the library program, the teacher librarian is the main point of focus in training. The IBC training focuses on empowering the teacher librarian to support children and fellow teachers in the understanding and implementation of the program. The same applies to library management and sensitization of the community.

The same approach is used for our materials training. Our teachers are the focus as we source participants in writing activities. We believe that the more we support our teachers and build their capacity in all spheres of their professional practice, the more confident they will be and conversant with the program. We aim to inspire them to do more and achieve

more over and above serving their children through this program.

Even as we proceed to expand the program and support not just the habit, but also the skill of reading, we purpose to continue this approach: increase the training hours for teachers annually, increase intensity and frequency of teacher support, and ensure an existing and supportive mentorship system that works for them.

We prefer to do this and not use authoritarian systems to send down the program to the implementors. Instead, we are working with laid-down Government institutions to build a strong coaching and mentorship relationship with the teachers.

**Caleb. N. Ndishakiye**  
Program Specialist, IBC Uganda

## Learning and Fun during Training Sessions

“The two districts you need to pilot are Mitooma and Mubende,” advised the Commissioner, Basic Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Sports. One of the trainers had never heard of Mitooma District, but Mitooma it was.

On 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2021, we set off for Mubende for the first IBC teacher training workshop for Headteachers and teacher librarians. Later, we went to Mitooma district for another teacher training. In all these trainings, the IBC facilitators; namely, the Program Specialist, Mr. Caleb Ndishakiye; Operations Lead, Ms. Annette Kiberu; and Literacy Specialist, Ms. Margaret Baleeta, have been enriched by interacting with seasoned teachers who

share willingly not only their experiences in teaching reading, but also games they use to make their lessons lively and challenges that they encounter. All these interactions have been learning grounds for both participants and facilitators.

The review sessions are some of the most exciting sessions, where games are used as participants share their take-home points. Every participant is actively involved in the game and the learning activity. This makes the sessions informal, lively, and all-inclusive, at the same time very productive.

Another interesting point of reflection the facilitators have observed is how teachers who were not part of the IBC trainings are successfully implementing the library

period in the “IBC way.” Because IBC’s overarching goal is to have the habit and skill (or the other way around) of reading inculcated in learners of all classes, our request to the Headteachers and the teacher librarians that attend our trainings is likewise to train the rest of the teachers in their schools.

To our great joy, some of the program’s most active and enthusiastic implementers are those teachers who were trained in the schools. We have had the pleasure of observing some of these teachers conducting the library activities and have come to realize that a significant percentage of the success of this program depends on individual classroom teachers’ willingness

and effort to make the library period work.

Among the challenges participants brought up, one of which came from the District Inspector of schools, is the recurring question of assessing learners for activities carried out during the library period. It is gratifying to note that a year later, the same Inspector admitted that the formal assessment is not ideal since the results are already shown in the high-interest learners during the library periods.

Overall, the trainings have been a lot of fun and learning to both the participants and the facilitators.

**Annette M. Kiberu,**  
IBC Operations Lead

**Margaret L. Baleeta, IBC**  
Literacy Specialist Consultant

## The Library Period Enhancing Learners’ Literacy: Testimony from Nyakatsiro Primary School



*Teacher Kyokushaba Edidah guiding pupils during a Library lesson*

Before the roll-out of the Ideal Book Collection (IBC) project in Mitooma, the school library of Nyakatsiro Primary School, like other primary schools in the district, was but a usual bookstore in the school, serving as an office at different times.

But with the support from the Reading Association of Uganda (RAU), Room to Read, and the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) through the IBC project, Nyakatsiro has established a functional and fully stocked school library that has become the pinnacle of the school.

With the support from the IBC program and the MoES through teacher refresher professional

training and emphasis on library management and use, the school, like many others in the district, is changing to accord the library period the space on the school timetable that it deserves.

The teacher librarian at the school, Ms. Kyokushaba Edidah, says that of all the lessons on the timetable, the library period is the most loved lesson by her P3 class! She says that the learners remind her whenever the time for the library period approaches. Because they don’t want to miss the opportunity to read stories, they always look forward to the lesson.

Teacher Edidah says that even though the pupils’ literacy competencies were greatly affected by the two years of the Covid-19 lockdown, the learners’ interest and fun they find in reading storybooks during the library period has helped them enhance their reading skills.

**Eliab Ikyiriza,**  
IBC Literacy Program Field Officer,  
Mitooma

## Beyond the Reading scores: A case for Reading for Pleasure

Many governments, development partners, educationists, and parents agree on the importance of reading among young learners. Developing reading skills (decoding, print awareness, and comprehension) is important, yet it is not the only or sufficient goal of reading/ literacy education.

As teachers, parents and caregivers support learners’ reading skills, it is important for them to lay equal emphasis on the habit or culture of reading. The habit of reading entails learners making deliberate choices to value and prioritize reading beyond the classwork or subject matter. It includes learners willingly and often reading both for pleasure and enjoyment as well for information. Using examples from the west, nurturing voluntary reading to cultivate enjoyment of books has been a toll order. Data from pre-



## SUCCEEDING AT ALL COSTS: A TALE OF A MODEL LIBRARY

Like most schools in the country, Rwanyamunyoni Primary School in Mitooma District experienced a challenge of huge enrolment at the start of the 2022 academic year. This was primarily attributed to the two years of COVID-19 lockdown that caused delays in learners joining school and others not progressing to classes of the next level.

The enrolment explosion was a challenge mainly because the schools did not have adequate classroom structures to accommodate the surge in numbers.

The school's need for additional classrooms coincided with the need for expanding the

school library since the school had just received IBC books. As the school administration waited for funding from the government, it used its creativity by using the available resources and means to set up another library that has turned out to be a model one in the district. First, the school built a wooden bark structure and covered it with iron sheets for an additional classroom to pave the way for a spacious library room. Then, one of the best classrooms was set up as a library.

One more thing that makes the Rwanyamunyoni story remarkable was their resource mobilization strategy. When the school received the books from the IBC



*Teacher Bainenama Mary of Rwanyamunyoni Conducting a Library Lesson.*

program, the Headteacher, Mr. Duncan Muramuzi, mobilized former students, who overwhelmingly embraced the idea of contributing to the establishment of a bigger functional library for their alma mater from the classroom that had been secured.

It is from such limited resources but with clear vision and strategy that Rwanyamunyoni

Primary School has established a model library that impressed the State Minister for Primary Education, Dr. Joyce Moriku Kaducu during her visit to the district. She applauded the school administration for setting up such a beautiful reading environment for the children.

**Eliab Ikyiriza**, IBC Literacy Program Field Officer, Mitooma

Covid-19 pandemic showed that 1 in 3 thirteen-year-olds picked up a book for pleasure and fun reading.

Reading interest and ability is linked to many wonderful things, including more complex vocabulary, socio-emotional aspects, and later successes in school and life. Why should we encourage reading for pleasure among school-going children? Research evidence points at pleasure reading as a panacea to education success, including high performance in reading assessments. At a time when educators are emphasizing of social emotional learning, reading for pleasure is an activity that has emotional and social consequences

Reading for pleasure is alternately in different contexts referred to as independent reading, voluntary reading, leisure reading, recreational reading or ludic reading. The National Literacy Trust defines it as the reading we do of our free will, anticipating the satisfaction we will get from reading. To cultivate and promote reading for pleasure, education stakeholders could do several things. First, ensure that

children have access to high-quality, diverse formats and genres of books communally and individually.

The library (whether separate, classroom, corner, or metallic box with books) is a critical space for fostering reading for pleasure. When this space is friendly to the child, offering opportunities for older/adult modeling through read-aloud, shared, or independent reading, children develop that love for reading.

Clark and Hawkins (2011) reported a link between library use and reading for pleasure. They noted that young people using their school or public library are nearly twice as likely to read outside class daily.

In addition, a positive relationship exists between the estimated number of books in the home and children's reading attainment. Therefore, teachers, parents, and caregivers must demonstrate a love of reading by ensuring books are accessible to children.

**Titus Charo Kazungu**

Associate Director, Literacy Program  
Africa. Room to Read

## The Birth or Rebirth of the Literacy Cloud

The Literacy Cloud (LC) is one of a kind online innovation that has rocked Uganda and promises to revolutionize reading in the country. Based on Room to Read's award-winning innovation, the LC is a literacy program that combines the science of learning to read with the magic of powerful storytelling in many different languages, including Luganda, Runyankore-Rukiga, English, and Kiswahili.

In addition, teachers, children's book creators, and government agencies can utilize the different resources to create a culture of reading for early-grade learners.

The year 2022 has witnessed the LC site transition from the traditional PDF books to the Story Viewer format, where a user can read a book by flipping pages online. With the Story Viewer, you can download, share, rate, and have offline access.

The site was tested during the World Book and Copyright Day celebrations at the National Library in Kampala from 20th to 22nd April 2022. With over 100 participants from officials from Government, cultural kingdoms, publishers, parents, and school children, the LC site received resounding guest visitation during the event.

With the global surge in technological advancement, the LC provides a platform for reading and literacy to keep up with the pace.

**Emmanuel Kafeero**,  
ICT Specialist, IBC

## ROADSIDE CONVERSATIONS WITH STORYBOOKS



One of the privileges I have enjoyed as a field officer for Mitooma District is the opportunity to live and interact with the local community, both during work hours and non-work hours. This has led to intentional professional and personal relationships.

One Sunday evening, as I was walking around in the neighborhood, I heard from a distance the voices of children seemingly in a heated discussion. As I approached, my heart melted while listening to this group of about four children playing by the roadside and deep in conversation that they hardly noticed any approaching person, later alone a bystander.

The conversations were heated, each fighting for space to tell their favorite story they had read from the new 'storybooks' in their school!

I had to make a sound to catch their attention. They did not know that I was part of the IBC team. I asked each of them about the books they had read and their favorite ones. They had a sizable number of collections that they had picked and read.

The roadside conversations are now meaningful and impacting the lives of these children. They are now a source of sharing knowledge and wisdom among the little children in Mitooma.

The significant implication of this encounter is how the books given to schools have impacted the learners, to the point of being part of their casual conversations.

Books have the power to travel places and cause a change in the lives of our children. As Room to Read envisions, "*World change starts with Educated children.*"

**Eliab Ikyiriza,**  
IBC Literacy Program Field Officer, Mitooma

## Read Aloud: The Elephant and the Egg



“Omugere, omugere, omugere!” she reads as she stamps her feet on the floor, demonstrating and imitating the sound of the elephant’s big feet and its movements. She is reading “Wanjovu n’egi” a Luganda version of “Elephant and the Egg.”

This is Susan Nalugya, one of the outstanding teachers, reading during a library lesson at Mubende Primary School.

For a Read Aloud story to interest children and cause them to love reading, a teacher has to demonstrate and imitate actions, and read with fluency and clear pronunciation, termed prosodic reading.

Nalugya exhibits the skill of bringing out the child and is not intimidated by other people watching her. She does not only read with intonation but is also audible enough, given her large class.

In addition, she is able to create enthusiasm in the most withdrawn child in her class. How she manages to keep more than ninety children engaged is impressive.

Other teachers in the program have mastered the art of reading aloud to children. “I mostly use Read aloud in Primary One and Two because most of my children have not yet started reading on their own,” says Noeline Nakazibwe, a teacher at Mazooba Primary School.

“I only read aloud to children in Primary One these days because my children in Primary Two can read on their own,” says Sylvia Nalubinga, the teacher librarian of St. Mary’s Primary School, Mubende.

Before reading aloud, the teacher asks children to predict what they expect to find in the book. Predicting does not only motivate children to think ahead, but it also encourages participation. This is evident at Kigamba Primary School during predictions, where children mention actions from their previous reading. “We have a reading club which explains why our children have read most of these books,” says the Headteacher, Christopher Ssenyondo. He adds that they have reading competitions within the school and with neighbouring schools, creating a habit of reading in children.

**Immaculate Tumwesigye**  
IBC LPFO, Mubende