

Update on Mobile Library and ICT facility

In 2011, Kawempe Youth Centre (KYC) re-established its mobile library service which currently operates in 17 schools through providing books and facilitating reading sessions in class and at the centre during the school term. Each school recommends 2 teachers as contact persons for the service in the respective schools. Every year, KYC conducts teachers' workshops to inspire them in their profession and to contribute to the improvement of the quality of education in Kawempe division. This report is about the activities that were done during the course of the year 2017, challenges and recommendations on how to strengthen the service.

Activities

- 1) KYC received children's story books from Book Aid International through Uganda Community Libraries Association (UgCLA). All these books, most of which were 1 title, were included in the station children's library.
- 2) KYC conducted 1 teachers' workshop in March 2017. Participants discussed ways in which to improve the mobile library service and contributed ideas to the new strategic plan 2018 – 2022.

Achievements

- 1) Increasingly, schools take the initiative to visit KYC to know more about the mobile library service. Some of these schools have got to know about the service through word of mouth from partner schools that are benefitting from the service.
- 2) Out of the last workshop, many of the schools have invited KYC to assist them in setting up their school libraries. Some schools also got interested in redesigning their classes to create stimulating learning environments for their children. All the schools that participate in the trainings are members of the mobile library service.
- 3) It has been noted that the registered mobile library teachers have not changed schools. This has enabled KYC to have continuity in the effective management of books as both parties put in practice what they have learnt through the workshops. The low turnover of teachers has also resulted in improved communication between KYC and the schools.

Challenges

- 1) There is an ever increasing demand for text books and children's readers. KYC doesn't have the capacity to meet all the information needs of the schools. During the year, we received at least 5 new schools which wanted to receive books but we didn't have enough books to give to the schools. Besides that, all the mobile library books are out dated which affects the registration of new schools to utilize the service. To keep the old schools and to attract new schools to make use of the service requires new books.
- 2) The Ugandan school syllabus changes from time to time resulting in the need to regularly update library stock.

- 3) Most schools in Uganda still conduct teaching in the traditional way. Exploring internet for online educational resources is a new thing. In addition to this, most teachers lack creativity in lesson planning and other extracurricular activities. Some of the schools are dependent on KYC to implement creative reading sessions.
- 4) It was noted that although book management had improved due to better recording systems, almost all of the schools didn't have shelves to display the books and or proper storage facilities for example cupboards for the books.
- 5) During the assessment of schools for the ICT pilot project in schools it was noted that most of the schools don't have regular power supply or even the funds to acquire ICT equipment for the purpose of accessing online resources and opportunities. It was also noted that most of the schools teachers didn't have ICT skills. Promoting integration of ICT in learning would therefore be a challenge.
- 6) Most of the schools find it challenging to contribute to the annual teacher training workshops so no training has been scheduled yet for this year.

Recommendations

- 1) Although most schools are getting interested in setting up school libraries, there is need to conduct mini workshops for each school since each of them have a different setting. KYC should give technical support in setting up and managing of the school libraries which will also help schools in not being dependent on KYC for books.
- 2) KYC recommends that schools be supported in acquiring book shelves or cupboards to enable proper display and storage of reading material.
- 3) In the near future, KYC should explore opportunities to work with institutions that provide e-books for example e-readers for the mobile library services and to train teachers in computer applications.

Below are some of the Mobile Library School Pictures from some of the member schools



Drawing and Shading activity



Staff organizing books for mobile library service



Group discussion about an art piece



Art Session within the class



Library hour visit at the Centre; taking children through the global goals



Community reading tent activity

ICT FACILITY

With recent funding from Mirembe foundation KYC will have 11 computers of which one acts as the server. The 10 computers are then used both for internet and for trainings. Using the N-Computing technology, KYC plans to link the 10 monitors to the main server with access to the Internet. KYC will also provide its customers with access to introductory computer, Internet and email classes. Also KYC is working with a nearby school to provide computer applications training to their students from Secondary level 4 to 6. In addition the school has registered with us to have their national ICT exams conducted at the centre. This is an opportunity for KYC to provide a service to the community while earning an income.

KYC was also part of the community libraries that participated in the Learning Circles facilitated by the Peer 2 Peer University (P2PU) and Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) which provides an online platform in which anyone anywhere can acquire online resources such as courses ranging

from business communications, web development. KYC and the other libraries are supposed to implement Learning Circles in their communities for about 3 – 6months where the target groups gather in groups to learn the selected courses using computers, smart phones and any other gadgets. This is an opportunity for KYC to empower young people, in and out of schools, with knowledge and skills.

For several months now, there has been a national challenge with internet connectivity which is affecting the effective functioning of the internet service on the whole. And then recently, our internet service provider, SMART Telecom, is experiencing coverage challenges in Kawempe division. Changing to another service provider will be very expensive. We are working with the current service provider to overcome this challenge.

