Educational
Support to
Children of
Underserved
Populations
(ESCUP)

Increasing Child Readership

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Increasing Child Readership

I. Introduction
* This module describes a procedure to stimulate the interest of children in reading and using school and class libraries. A CFS animator may use the module to prepare an orientation for librarians and class teachers.

II. Objectives
* Utilization of libraries is increased through increasing the reading material available and expanding the range of activities in the library.
* Children develop a interest in reading and increasingly become confident and independent readers.

III. Duration

* 2 hour orientation during a Thursday Technical meeting

IV. Materials and Resources Required

* Large poster paper
* Markers
* Cellotape
* Hand-out: Case studies of problems associated with the library

V. Procedure

1. *Improving the psycho-social learning environment of the library*

* The facilitator should ask participants in small groups to identify improvements that can be made to the school library. Ask participants to complete the following chart. Some ideas for improvement are provided but participants should add their own. The facilitator should remind participants that their time and resources are scarce. Therefore, the value of implementing an activity should be considered in terms of the contribution it can make to the learning achievements of a child. This and not the physical attractiveness of a library should be the main consideration.

Improving the psycho-social learning environment of the library	Expected impact on learning achievement	Follow-up activity	Resources required	When implementation can begin
Display of proverbs				
Educational posters				
Display of children's work/pictures				
Display of maps				
Letter corner				
Question of the week				
Educational games				
Photograph and picture display				
Spelling competitions				

2. Identifying solutions to common problems

- The facilitator should focus the attention of participants on various problems that arise in many school libraries. Divide the participants into small groups and ask them to discuss the problems described below (provided on a hand-out) and how the problem can be solved or prevented in the future. Compare and discuss the answers of different groups

- *Library is locked and children are unable to enter during their free time.*

- *The librarian only works in the morning and so no library service is available for children who attend school in the afternoon.*

- *Following the MoEYS redeployment of teachers, the librarian has been reappointed as a class teacher.*

- *No one in the school takes responsibility to maintain an inventory of books or to repair damaged books.*

- *Mobile library service to satellite schools does not function well.*

- *Librarian doesn't understand what type of statistics should be maintained about the library.*

- *Students from Grade 1 enter the library but do not stay for very long as they are unable to read and no special activities have been organized for them.*

- *The library is used frequently by a small number of children who are very interested in reading. Most other children visit the library at least a couple of times a month. However, there is a small group of children who never visit the library.*

- *Children in grade 5 and Grade 6 don't tend to visit the library so often as they have already read most of the interesting books that are available.*

3. Establishing a library corner in the classroom

- Effective use of a *library corner* in the classroom can strengthen students' reading skills.

- The following factors should be considered in organizing *a library corner*:

  (a) The teacher provides reading books for students. Books may be borrowed from the cluster library (or school library).

  (b) Teachers change the books in the library frequently so the students have a regular supply of new books.

  (c) Teachers should be conscious of providing books appropriate to the students' abilities. For example, a book with no pictures should not be put in the library corners for lower grades. In case teachers are not sure of what an appropriate level is, a simple test may be conducted before placing the book in the corner. The teacher should ask one or two average students to read a page of a book. If these students encounter too many difficulties, an easier level book should be selected. Slow learners as well as fast learners should be able to find books that are of interest to them.

  (d) It is important that children in the upper grades can reflect on what they have been reading. Therefore copies of *book review forms* should be available *in the library corner*. The teacher should explain to the children how to fill in the form and check whether or not questions in the form are clearly understood.

(e) After reading a book, students complete the *book review form*. The forms may be compiled into one large folder that is kept in *the library corner*. Students have an opportunity to read the ideas of other children and choose a book based on what other children have described.

(f) The class teacher (or school librarian) could set a question for children, "*Question of the Week*" or "*Question of the Day*". The question should be displayed in a prominent place and children have a week (or a day) to find the answer. Children try to find the answer to the question either by looking in the library corner (or the school library). Alternatively, the answer to the question may be found on an educational poster or map on display in a model classroom wall or on the wall of the library.

(g) *Pen-pal letters* exchanged between different clusters may also be kept in the library corner for children to read. Clusters participating in the CFS program should be encouraged to assist children write letters and reply to letters from children in other clusters.

4. *Expanding the range of reading material available in the library*

- The facilitator should highlight the problem that most libraries are unable to supply new books for children on a regular basis. The facilitator should ask the participants to brainstorm some ideas on how to make additional reading material available. In the initial brainstorming stage, all ideas should be noted on the blackboard. Some suggestions are provided below. However, the facilitator should elicit participants' own ideas first before presenting the following ideas.

❑ *Collecting old newspapers from members of the community*

❑ *Collecting old magazines from members of the community*

❑ *Binding pen-pal letters received from other schools into "Pen-pal letter" books*

❑ *Binding samples of work taken from the portfolio of individual children within one large class portfolio. A large class portfolio could be made using samples of work from previous academic years.*

❑ *Displaying project work such as local history research*

❑ *Binding interviews conducted by children with members of the community (see modules on "local history research", "role models", "cross-curricular thematic units") into "Interview with people in our locality" books*

❑ *Binding samples of news collected by children in various grades to form monthly journal books, e.g. , " Local news in October 2003" , " National news in November 2003" , " International news in January 2004"*

- Ask each small group of participants to conduct a more in-depth discussion of how to apply each idea. It may be helpful to consider some of the following questions in the small group discussions:

  o *Who will be responsible for coordinating this activity?*
  o *Who will be responsible for monitoring the suitability of reading material in magazines?*

o *Who will be responsible for monitoring legible presentation of children's work? This would also include a review of accurate spelling.*
o *If it is agreed that an activity is appropriate, when can implementation of the activity begin?*
o *What sort of steps need to be implemented and completed in relation to each activity before reaching the stage of successfully adding to the reading material of the library?*
o *What sort of resources and materials are required?*

5. *Encouraging the writing of stories by children, teachers and members of the community*

- An ideal way of adding to the reading material in the library is to encourage local people to write stories. If there is sufficient interest or a history of such activity in the locality, a workshop for local writers could be organized. A portion of the cluster grant would be used to supply required materials.