Mobile Libraries in the Free State Province
Participatory Action Research Project

Final report

Compiled by
Dr Lynette Jacobs (Project Leader)
Dr Frans Kruger
Dr Juliet Ramohai
Ms Annamarie du Preez

University of the Free State
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OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

Toward the end of 2014, VVOB put out a call for consultancy to strengthen and develop the research skills of DTDC staff of all Free State Districts by doing an impact study with a set of objectives. Following the acceptance of the proposal by the UFS team, we embarked on a project that was designed around Participatory Action Research towards the following objectives:

- To strengthen and develop the research skills of DTDC staff of all Free State Districts by doing an impact study.
- To develop a protocol/procedure to do an impact study on the use of mobile libraries in the Free State.
- To develop necessary tools to be used in the impact study.
- To equip DTDC staff with research skills needed for doing an impact study data collection, data analysis and report writing.
- To coach DTDC staff throughout the process.
- To guide the whole process of the impact study (protocol set up, data collection, data analysis, report writing).
- To compile an impact report based on the reporting of the DTDC staff.

Towards the above, firstly an outline of the research protocol was developed prior to the commencement of the project, and submitted to VVOB (summarised in (2)). A series of workshops were held at the University of the Free State (see Addendum A) where participants were provided with lectures on research, but also engaged in fine-tuning the purpose of the research, developing interview questions and developing the observation sheet. They were guided on analysing data and writing reports. Flowing from a need that was identified, a workshop for Mobile Operators and Library Assistants was also held. Visits were arranged to some of the Mobile Buses.

The following outputs were required:
- Research protocol (step by step guide on how to conduct the proposed research) (Submitted and also summarised in (2))
- Research instruments (e.g. survey, interview guide, ...) (Addendum B & Addendum C)
- Baseline report (submitted)
- Interim report (submitted)
- Final impact report (including a set of recommendations on the mobile library project, and on the research design and process) (this document).
# CONTENTS

Overview of the report .............................................................................................................. i

1 Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1

2 Methodology .......................................................................................................................... 3
   2.1 Participatory Action Research ......................................................................................... 3
   2.2 Research methods ........................................................................................................... 4
   2.3 Participants ...................................................................................................................... 5
   2.4 Research and other training ............................................................................................. 5

3 Findings ................................................................................................................................... 5
   3.1 The strategies and operations of the mobile libraries ....................................................... 5
   3.2 Value of the mobile libraries ............................................................................................ 9
   3.3 Challenges and concerns ................................................................................................. 15
   3.4 Strategies towards improvement ..................................................................................... 20

4 Reflection from the UFS staff members ............................................................................... 23

5 Guidelines ............................................................................................................................... 25

6 District reports ....................................................................................................................... 25

7 Dissemination of the findings ............................................................................................... 26
   7.1 South African Education Research Association Conference: October 2015 .................. 26
   7.2 XIV Annual International Conference of the Bulgarian Comparative Education Society (BCES)26
   7.3 2nd Biennial SLYSIG Conference. University of the Free State, Bloemfontein .......... 26
   7.4 Readers to Leaders ceremony ......................................................................................... 27

8 Recommendations for further research ................................................................................. 27

9 Conclusion ............................................................................................................................... 28

10 Acknowledgements .............................................................................................................. 28

11 Bibliography ......................................................................................................................... 29

Addenda ..................................................................................................................................... 31
   Addendum A: Programmes of the training sessions ............................................................. 31
   Addendum B: Interview questions ......................................................................................... 35
   Addendum C: Observation sheet ............................................................................................ 41
   Addendum D: Motheo district report ....................................................................................... 46
   Addendum E: Lejweleputswa Report ...................................................................................... 48
   Addendum F: Xhariep district report ...................................................................................... 59
   Addendum G: Thabo Mofutsanyane report .......................................................................... 64
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: A mobile library at a school in Japan ................................................................. 2
Figure 2: Research methods used ....................................................................................... 4
Figure 3: Images of mobile library buses ........................................................................... 6
Figure 4: Book are checked out during visits to schools ..................................................... 7
Figure 5: Corner libraries .................................................................................................. 7
Figure 6: Different ways of packing the bus ..................................................................... 8
Figure 7: Learners are keen to select books .................................................................... 10
Figure 8: A multi-grade Foundation phase class ............................................................... 12
Figure 9: Examples of print-rich classrooms .................................................................... 12
Figure 10: Pictures explained in class ............................................................................... 13
Figure 11: Vocabulary charts and book review forms ....................................................... 14
Figure 12: Schools serviced by the mobile libraries are often poorly protected against the
           elements ..................................................................................................................... 16
Figure 13: Learners from Stilte Primary School with their teacher .................................... 27
1 INTRODUCTION

Kofi Annan, the former UN chairperson, once indicated that “literacy is a bridge from misery to hope ... a platform for democratization”\(^1\). The ability to read with comprehension is essential, particularly in a developing country such as South Africa. Yet Zimmerman and Smit (2014, p. 1), based on several authors, point out that the reading comprehension of primary school learners in South Africa is of a poor standard. South African learners performed far below standard in both the PIRLS 2006 and the adapted prePIRLS 2011 tests. Van Staden and Bosker (2014, p. 7) recommend that in order to address this deficit, reading in the classroom, beyond the “formally scheduled reading time” during language lessons, are required to overcome this obstacle. According to Applegate and Applegate (in Van Staden and Bosker, 2014, p. 7), teachers should create classrooms that encourage learners to engage in reading, and the teachers themselves should be role models who enjoy reading. It is of particular importance to address this problem in rural schools, as learners in rural schools performed significantly poorer in the abovementioned tests than their peers who attend schools in urban areas (Nkosi, 2012, p. 1). Nkosi (2012, p. 1) quotes Vijay Reddy, executive director at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), who indicated that if “you improve [rural] schools you improve the national scores”.

In the context of South Africa there are different scenarios of rural schools. Particularly in two of the five districts in the Free State Province, many of these schools are situated in the former native homelands where people still live in poverty and neglect (Gardiner, 2008, p. 9). In the other three districts, the schools are mainly situated on farms some distance from towns, and the majority of the learners who attend these schools also live in dismal conditions. Although some of the schools in the former homeland areas are quite large (though many with poor infrastructure), most farm schools in the Free State province are quite small. There are often only one or two teachers teaching multi-grade classes. Only some of the schools have electricity and running water, and at many of the farm schools learners and staff members have to use pit toilets as no proper ablution facilities are available. Gardiner (2008, p. 14) argues that “there is a crisis in the whole South African education system, and that this crisis is most serious among learners in rural schools”.

According to Nkosi (2012, p1), Sarah Howie, the director of the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment and research coordinator for PIRLS in South Africa, indicated that while schools need resources to improve learner performance, many schools are without libraries. This was confirmed by Paton-Ash and Wilmot (2015, p. 1) who indicated that only 7% of state schools

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\(^1\) Obtained at http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/literacy
have stocked libraries. In order to support literacy in South Africa and to address the deficit of infrastructure to provide reading books to rural schools, SAPESI and other partners\textsuperscript{2} sponsored mobile libraries for all nine provinces in South Africa\textsuperscript{3}.

In Japan, where the literacy level is 99.8\%, municipalities are responsible for providing compulsory education. City libraries provide mobile library services to smaller schools. At this stage there is approximately 520 operational mobile libraries in Japan. According to regulations these buses have to be replaced after 12 years. Because they still have quite low mileage at that stage (about 30 000 – 70 000 km), through negotiations by SAPESI they are brought to South Africa to be used in all the provinces.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{A mobile library at a school in Japan}
\end{figure}

In the Free State province, these libraries are managed by District Teachers Development Centre (DTDC) staff members, and the mobile libraries have been servicing rural schools in all

\textsuperscript{2} Sony collects children’s books globally; The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides funding; Mitsui OSK Line transports the mobile libraries from Yokohama to Durban; JTI SA and Sumitomo Corp provide financial support; Honda SA provides generators; Volcano Advertising provides PR and Marketing support; Toyota SA, Nissan SA, Isuzu Truck SA and Mitsubishi Corporation provide vehicle maintenance support.

\textsuperscript{3} This project started in 2007.
five districts of the province. Towards the end of 2014, the Free State Department of Education, in collaboration with the Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical assistance (VVOB), commissioned the University of the Free State to embark on a participatory action research project aimed to:

- improve research capacity within the DTDC
- describe the work that the mobile libraries do, and
- appraise effect of the mobile libraries on schools and learners, towards improving their functionality

This report provides a synopsis of the findings of this research project that was concluded in September 2016.

2 METHODOLOGY

The research design followed in the study was Participatory Action Research (PAR).

2.1 PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

PAR is a cyclical process during which the researchers and participants act as equal partners in the process to identify ways to improve a particular situation. During the process the participants observed, planned, took action, monitored the outcome of the actions, reflected on what was observed and then, where needed, modified the plan (cf. LeeFon, Jacobs, le Roux, & De Wet, 2013, p. 2).

In order to appraise and improve the functioning of the mobile libraries in line with the action research cycle, the following questions was explored:

1. What is the current situation regarding the use of the resources provided by the mobile libraries and what are the expectations of schools with regard to the mobile libraries? (Observe current situation and needs) (Observe)

2. What are the experiences and challenges of those involved with the mobile libraries? (Observe)

3. How can mobile libraries assist teachers and learners in this regard? (Reflection and Planning)

4. What can be done towards improving the current situation? (Reflection and Planning)

5. What effects do these strategies have on the situation once implemented? (Take action and monitor its effect)
2.2 RESEARCH METHODS

The study followed a qualitative approach, using interviews, documents, focus group discussions and observations as strategies to collect data. These are briefly summarised in the context of PAR and presented in Figure 2.

![Diagram of research methods]

**Figure 2: Research methods used**

During visits to the schools the Resource Coordinators conducted individual interviews with relevant staff members at the schools on the usage of the libraries, the challenges that the teachers and learners face, and possible ways to overcome these challenges. They also conducted interviews with the Mobile Operators and the Library Assistants who travel to the schools, while the Media Subject Advisors and the Resource Coordinators interviewed each other. The UFS staff members visited some of the schools\(^4\) and had informal discussions with the role players. The recording of learner practices by means of observation sheets also took place during the second stage of data collection.

All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by the researcher-participants at the DTDCs. The transcripts were sent to the UFS partners for the initial analysis, after which each district was requested to write their own district report. These reports are attached in Addenda D-H.

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\(^4\) Four of the five districts were visited. We were unable to secure a visit to the last one, but was in contact with the media subject advisor.
2.3 Participants
The participants in the research projects are the Resource Coordinators, Media Subject Advisors, Library Assistants, Mobile Operators and teachers and principals of the schools in the five districts who are visited by the mobile libraries. Five staff members of the University joined the project, with others assisting on an *ad hoc* basis during the workshops.

2.4 Research and Other Training
In order to develop research capacity, and also to enable the project to have a participatory nature, a number of workshops were held. Initially information about research was shared and then the details of the project was planned collaboratively. For instance, the initial interview questions were jointly decided upon, and suggestions were put forward on the need for further workshops. In follow-up workshops the participants were provided with information in terms of data analysis and report writing, and an observation sheet was developed to assist with describing how the library books are used. One of the action plans implemented was the facilitation of a short workshop for Mobile Operators and Library Assistants to bring them on board in terms of where the project was going, but also to provide them with specific information that they requested.

Turning a professional educator into a researcher is not something that happens in an instance, but in the course of the project it was clear that the notion of researching your practice, and taking steps towards improvement, was growing on the participants. One of the challenges that the participants experienced in terms of the methodology was on how to engage as equal partners with others that are, in terms of line function, in a lower or higher position. Furthermore, participant-researchers initially tended to keep to the proposed interview questions as if that was a set script, and did not freely follow up in a conversational manner. These and other hiccups were addressed in follow-up workshops. The programmes of the workshops are available in Addendum A. Towards the end of the project, the different districts all submitted a report, and collectively presented their findings to an audience.

3 Findings

3.1 The Strategies and Operations of the Mobile Libraries
In the Free State Province, each of the five districts has a District Teacher Development Centre (DTDC). A Resource Coordinator (experienced, senior, qualified educator) manages the mobile libraries in the district as one of his/her tasks. Each district has 2 mobile libraries, each with a Mobile Operator (driver) and a Library Assistant. The minimum requirement for these two posts is a National Senior Certificate or equivalent, and the Mobile Operators must have
an appropriate driver’s licence and annually obtain a public drivers permit (PDP). Some of these staff members, however, have post-school qualifications.

Books, mainly provided by the sponsors, are stocked on shelves on the inside of the vehicles, and in the case of the newer buses, also on the outside. The appearance, in particular of the first set of buses, is inviting. One participant stated that “the physical appearance of the bus is intriguing and seems fun for the learners. They give it joyful attention when we arrive [at new schools]”. The new buses have not yet been decorated. It was noted that some of the buses have dents and scratches, and need to be repaired.

![Figure 3: Images of mobile library buses](image)

The book stock is kept at the DTDC. The Mobile Operators are responsible for the cleaning and basic maintenance of the bus, and together with the Library Assistants, stock the bus from books in the stock-holding. As many of the schools that are visited are without electricity, the mobile libraries are equipped with generators. Each bus is also equipped with a laptop, a scanner and a printer. From Mondays to Thursdays the mobile libraries travel to different schools, where the Library Assistants issue books to the school using an electronic issuing system (LIBWIN). The school then receives a printout of all the books that were issued. Upon return to the DTDC, the data is transferred to the mainframe of the LIBWIN system. The off-line system has a capacity of 10 000 records.
Due to the many schools that are visited (on average each district provides the service to between 50 and 80 schools) and the distances that the mobile libraries have to travel, schools are usually visited between once and three times a term. When the mobile libraries visit the schools again, they collect the previously issued books, and new books are issued. At some schools the teachers select the books, and at others, learners are invited onto the bus to select books themselves. It often happens that the Intermediate Phase learners as well as their teachers select books, while the Foundation Phase teachers select books for their learners. Most teachers keep the books in their classrooms in what they call corner libraries or book corners (often a simple carton box or a desk).

Even if a particular pupil selects two or three specific books, in the end all the other learners in the class will get the opportunity to read them, because they are returned to this corner library for that purpose. Only at a few schools are the learners allowed to take the books home, as the teachers are anxious that the learners will not return the books in good condition. Mr Hasunuma, however supports the idea that the children must be able to take the books home, as the supply of books is not limited.
At the start of the term, the school visit programme is given to the schools. This is a challenge by itself, because communicating with the schools is problematic (no landline, fax machines or email facilities available). Usually the mobile library staff members confirm their visit in the morning by calling a teacher’s cellular phone, although this is quite costly. Each bus is expected to service two to three schools per day, depending on the distance that the bus must travel. In instances where schools are not in close proximity, the bus will only be able to service two schools. Although it is an educational service, cost effectiveness and impact must also be taken into account. Each DTDC stocks and organises the bus according to the needs in that particular district. At most centres they use a combination of the Dewey Decimal Classification System and age appropriate reading (splitting Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase fiction). In some of the buses the books are also sorted according to language. Often the books are packed in a normal shelving manner, with only the backs of the books visible, but not always. One participant explained: “Books are also placed with the cover facing the teachers. It saves time and they can immediately see what is available”.

![Figure 6: Different ways of packing the bus](image)

The Library Assistants and the Resource Coordinator often plan together which resources to load, as the Resource Coordinator is the one with the knowledge about the teaching profession. One Resource Coordinator explained:
“The Library Assistants are not familiar with the teaching profession. I am the one with the expertise. I inform them that these resources are useful for certain learning areas”.

The Resource Coordinators use opportunities like this to contribute to the development of their mobile library staff members (e.g. workshops, informal discussions).

3.2 VALUE OF THE MOBILE LIBRARIES

When the mobile libraries get to the schools, it is not just an administrative exercise of issuing books. The Mobile Operators and Library Assistants usually interact with the learners. They will talk to the learners about the books, and inquire about why they select particular books. Sometimes the mobile library staff members will “pick a book and ask a learner to read to them”. The positive, inviting and caring manner in which the mobile library staff members engage with the learners is noteworthy. One of the UFS team members reflected as follows after a visit:

From my observations and discussion it is clear that the Mobile Operators and Library Assistants are central to the success of the project. They are people that engage with the learners and teachers and who knows best what the project entails on the ground.

The Library Assistants and the Mobile Operators know their resources well and are able to assist and advise the teachers on particular books, as one of them explained: “I help the learners and the teachers to choose the books that they need to help them to be more efficient in the class”. Furthermore, the libraries specifically stock non-fiction books that “educators can use in order to empower themselves”. In general, there is no shortage of books, as was explained by a participant: “Fortunately SAPESI and SONY International assisted in getting donations to stock the mobile libraries. We really have a lot of books to ensure that the service to schools will continue”.

Mobile library staff participants reported mainly positively about their visits to schools. One narrated as follows:

“When the learners together with the teachers see the Mobile library bus ... they will all flock to the bus. They know that we are providing them with the resources that they need”.
Figure 7: Learners are keen to select books

A school principal confirmed their excitement to be part of the project:

“A joy is the new ideas from reading. We have books in the classrooms, but those books – they are familiar, but when you [the mobile library team] bring books, you are bringing new ideas to them. They are getting interested to reading the story”.

The mobile library staff participants are convinced that the service makes a “difference in the learners’ lives by improving literacy in the rural areas”, especially the schools that are far from towns. They are very explicit about the purpose:

“We want to improve reading, especially English. Being able to communicate in English will improve the experience of learners in other subjects as English is the language of teaching and learning”.

One of the teachers of a farm school confirmed that they are indeed achieving this:

“It increases vocabulary of learners and independent reading, where learners can read on their own. It also brought the skills of recount, where a child can retell the story and sequencing. Also creativity, where a child can build his or her own story”.

One more teacher similarly explained⁵:

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⁵ At this particular school it was noticeable how easily the learners could converse in English, although it was not the case at all the schools that were visited.
“It makes a big difference, because in language, because it helps learners to be able to communicate with others at ease. So that they can go and read at home, and then come and tell their stories to other learners. Because children can read on their own, even if it is wrong, it is not 100 percent yet, but we can see learners getting used to it… Others say, I was sitting with my mom, so we were happy – after I have read with my mom… Parents give us information on the stories that [the children] tell their parents … they know what the child is reading about”.

Yet another teacher indicated that “it helps learners to read at ease, get used to reading” and “It has enhanced the level of reading of the children tremendously”. A Resource Coordinator indicated that she was convinced that the service is making a difference and suggested that “reading comprehension and fluency has improved by 50% since using the mobile library”. Although no proof on this quantifying exists, this is the perception amongst all the Resource Coordinators.

Many schools are keen to join the project because of what they gain. One principal, at a school that was not serviced by the mobile library before, explained their understanding regarding the mobile libraries as follows: “[it is] a library brought to school to offer schools and learners access to some of the resources”. Another explained: “What is good is that they are promoting reading in a broader way. New knowledge is gained”, and also “it helps learners to read at ease, get used to reading”. However there are schools who are not interested to be part of the project, and who do not appreciate the service.

Regarding how the schools are using the books, the data showed that books are being utilised in a number of ways. Even though there might already be books and resources at some of the schools, the mobile libraries provide additional resources. Staff members at schools indicated that they use the library books in the following ways: “We use it in group guided reading, independent reading and shared reading”. Furthermore, one teacher explained: “When the teachers are absent the learners have books to read”. In many of the multi-grade classes, the mobile library books are being used to assist the teacher with constructive activities. When the learners of one grade are actively being taught by the teacher, and learners from other grades are done with their work, learners fetch books from the corner library and read them (it was noted during classroom observation that “when teaching grades 4 and 5, the grade 6 and 7 learners use library books for independent reading”).
At some schools the learners keep a record of what they read ("there are cards to help me show what type of books the learners like to read. Some will read one book while others will read 4 to 5 books").

Furthermore, a participant explained that "most of the schools have a reading period, and they use the mobile library books for that ... reading to improve reading skills and vocabulary". The teachers shared the following regarding the books:

"It has helped a lot to improve the class room to be conducive to teaching and learning and again, it broadens the knowledge of learners".
The books are often used as resources to help with assessment: “Sometimes the comprehension test you can take from the resources received”. There are also social benefits:

“Learners would sit together that would never sit together and read the one book. They share the same book. They sit together, they read together, they talk together”.

Some districts organise an open day, where “learners will be called to read in front of other learners ... [also to] tell [their peers] what they have read”. The value of reading books from the mobile library was summed up by one principal:

“When other learners read in the class, other learners use the books from the Mobile library, I can assure you that even last year there were learners who could not read but after the December holidays, they kept some of the books and then they could read after the holidays”.

And another said:

“One thing I can say, the teachers are talking more and more ... about the number of resources and the different kinds of resources. The little ones, they like books with pictures. After school, 10 to 15 minutes, we give them time to read”.

One of the Resource Coordinators exclaimed: “The joy when a young Mosotho child can take an English book and read with confidence cannot be expressed in words”

During classroom observation, a number of aspects regarding reading were noted:

• “Reading is taking place at different times. Times allocated on timetable”
• “Grade 1-3 learners read independently”
• “Pictures from the books are explained while reading is taking place”.

*Figure 10: Pictures explained in class*
Improvements were also indicated:

- “There is an improvement regarding reading skills, since the Mobile library visited the school. A variety of books available and taken out from the Mobile library. Learners want to read book borrowed from the Mobile library – very keen and eager, as they ask the teacher when these books could be read.”

- “Leaners are reading quite well, and they obviously enjoy reading. The principal is very much involved and supportive of the project.”

- “ANA not written, but continuous assessment showed improvement”

The appearance of classrooms have also improved due to advice from the Resource Coordinators:

- “Classroom library is half the class size”.

- “Vocabulary charts in all the classes and it is clear that some of the words are from the mobile library books”.

![Vocabulary charts and book review forms](image)

*Figure 11: Vocabulary charts and book review forms*

While in some schools teachers use the mobile library books during assessments (“learners have been assessed on their book reports”), in other schools the library books are used for reading strategies together with the Department of Education books. Still, some teachers religiously stick to the departmental books for teaching:
• “Teachers use Departmental workbooks [only] during reading period at the end of each day”.

• “Departmental workbooks used for reading strategies”.

Other schools seem to be on their way of using the books as originally intended:

• “Learners are involved in reading activities but no records”.

• “Not yet engage in reading strategies⁶. We are only using the books for reading and to get the learners interested”.

3.3 CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

Some of the challenges explained by the mobile library staff relate to practical issues. These include the following:

• The long distances that they travel, and particularly the gravel roads that are in a poor condition (“80% of the roads are risk taking, I feel it’s a risk to have someone in a bus four days a week, driving that type of road with a bus”), can be hard on the staff members as well as on the vehicles. They often have to deal with breakdowns. Also, obtaining road-worthy certificates takes a long time. On the positive side, some of the service providers that are contracted at the centres provide speedy and excellent service to get the vehicles back on the road again. One mobile library operator suggested that they “are in need of protective clothing”.

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⁶ The mobile library teams (including the Mobile Operators and Library Assistants) received training in specific reading strategies that are employed particularly in the foundation phase, namely group guided reading, group reading, shared reading and independent reading.
Figure 12: Schools serviced by the mobile libraries are often poorly protected against the elements

- The Mobile Operators seem to only have technical manuals for the mini-buses written in Japanese, and this prevents them from understanding the basics of the maintenance of the buses.

- PDP licences have to be renewed annually, and this involves medical and other costs to the Mobile Operators.

- It seems to be rather difficult and costly to communicate with farm schools. Schools mostly have no landlines and no internet, so mobile library staff members have to phone on the cell phones of the teachers.

- Another practical frustration of the centres is that when posts are vacated, the perception is that it must be filled by a person on the excess list. A negative perception exists about these people as they are seen to not be committed to positively contribute to the project. Also, in some districts there is nobody on the list on that particular level. (Another participant however contradicted this: “When we have a vacancy it gets advertised and it gets filled”).

Other issues that were raised related to employment (“I have been a Mobile Operator on contract for 5 years now”) and communication (“we need contract cell phones for each bus”).
In one of the districts where they have a number of large schools on the project, they suggested that a “bakkie” can help to collect the books and thus make space for more new books in the bus, particularly in the districts where the schools have large numbers of learners.

Some concerns were raised in terms of the resources on the bus. Although the participants appreciate the number and the quality of the books that are available, relevant and recent information is sometimes difficult to obtain. In the current global context, with knowledge expanding daily, they do have a need to be able to download current information from the Internet for teachers on request. Due to the difficulty of communicating with the schools, certain information is only requested verbally by the teacher upon arrival, and then there is no means of getting the information. Although such information can be downloaded at the DTDC, by the time the bus returns, that information might not be needed any more.

More books written in African languages are needed. One teachers explained: “We are running short of books in the vernacular, we are teaching SeTswana and Sesotho at the very same school... and we are running out of readers for those languages.”

It was however also mentioned that “for primary schools we need more picture dictionaries. High schools need textbooks that support the curriculum”. The intention of the mobile libraries was always to serve primary schools in order to promote reading. Yet in some districts, the mobile library teams also serve secondary schools. The Resource Coordinator explained how difficult it is not to use the resources of the project in assisting teachers and learners who request assistance (which translates into also servicing high schools). In some districts the mobile libraries therefore do visit a few secondary schools. It seems that in quite a few (and seemingly growing) instances libraries in high schools are being used as ‘camping rooms’ for accommodation. In order to improve their pass rates, schools often arrange extra classes, especially for grade 12 learners, over weekends and during holidays. To provide learners with accommodation to attend these classes, library spaces are often used, with the consequence that in many instances library books are moved to storage and/or the library becomes unusable by the rest of the school. The Resource Coordinator expressed her concern about this but felt powerless to address this as schools are under pressurized to improve their grade 12 results as directed by the district office of the FSDOE.

Mobile libraries that visit large numbers of schools have particular concerns because they cannot pack enough books on the bus ("they visit all the schools and by the time they come to us all the books are out" (teacher); “The buses servicing the big schools, when they go to that school little resources will be left on the bus when the bus goes to the next school” (library assistant)).
Some concerns were raised regarding the books that are borrowed:

- Many intermediate learners take out very simple books, and often Walt Disney stories only. The staff members believe that they choose these because the stories are familiar to them, due to television. They feel strongly that there must be a way of encouraging learners to read unfamiliar books. This was noted by one of the UFS team members who observed that “the books that the learners chose were mostly graphic novels”.

- Secondary school teachers seem to believe that their learners are only supposed to take out non-fiction books. One participant explained: “Secondary schools only take non-fiction books, claiming that learners need those. This prevents the learners from reading for enjoyment”.

- On the other hand, primary school learners seem to be under the impression that they may only select fiction books. It was observed at one school during a visit from the UFS research team that a teacher was upset because a primary school learner took a large non-fiction book that did not fit into the corner library. She explicitly instructed the next group of learners to select small books only. (The Resource Coordinator made a note to have a follow-up discussion with the teachers about the advantages of reading non-fiction).

Particular challenges in terms of getting books to and from hostel learners were explained:

“Learners from different schools stay in one hostel, and now they come with books from different schools, and the books get mixed up”.

Another similarly explained:

“The problem with the hostel schools is that the learners come after school, but now there are learners from different schools at the hostel, there is no one responsible. … You will only be able to give books to the learners who are there at the hostel not the others who are still at the school”.

The mobile staff expressed their unease about the teachers rigidly sticking to the “rainbow books“, and only wanting learners to read CAPS-related materials. A few members of the mobile library teams pointed out that they are criticised by some teachers:

- “They want CAPS-related books”.
- “They say we bring old books, and not curriculum books”.
- “Some teachers are not interested in the mobile libraries as they are only interested in teaching the rainbow books”.


One participant defended the teachers’ lack of support for the mobile library project:

“Teachers are so much under pressure to complete the rainbow books, and the syllabus, that they do not have time for the libraries”.

Even some mobile library officials felt that books aligned to the curriculum are needed:

“We need intermediate phase curriculum books (textbooks that are aligned with CAPS) so that it can assist teachers with the curriculum”.

Although many schools are positive about the mobile libraries, at some schools they are perceived negatively. As the participants explain:

- “Some principals have a bad attitude towards the service”.
- “Some schools expect us to come after teaching time, because they say we disrupt the school”.
- “Some teachers are not supporting us, some teachers are not interested because the new curriculum books are not in the library”.
- “They say we always bring old books and they do not find them useful”.
- “The school has received donations for books, but the books are kept in a cupboard”.
- “Time is not set aside on the timetable for reading”.
- “Teacher indicates she does not have time this year to let them share or summarise what they read”.
- “Some teachers tell you ... we don’t see the need of this, we are very busy, ANA this! ANA that! Some will be polite and explain why they can’t attend to you”.
- “Some teachers are forced to be pessimistic because of the principals’ attitude towards the project”.

There seems to be a constant worry about the expectation to establish permanent libraries at the schools. It seems that even when books are available at farm schools, no space is available that can be turned into a library. If an extra room gets built (which rarely happens) it is used to accommodate more learners in the school rather than to set up a library. On the other hand, at some of the bigger schools in the townships there are rooms available to possibly use as a library, but there are no books available, and the library committees that are
supposed to have been established at the schools are not functioning. It was explained that because of the vast number of schools, the media subject advisors are not able to visit the schools regularly to support the initiatives of the library committees.

A number of issues were raised about protocol, such as the following:

“Farm owners seem very much agitated by our arrival when we haven’t reported our presence on their property”.

The mobile library staff feel that they are left on their own to convince schools to join the project.

“When you go to schools and there is a new school that doesn’t use the service you will stop there and go and explain the service to the principal, when he [or she] is interested then we have the policy. He must sign the contract and then we can start to service the school”.

Lastly, concerns were raised about the support for rural and farm schools beyond the mobile libraries. Many of the farm schools apparently do not get curriculum support, and often the mobile library staff are the only people who visit these schools. One of the UFS staff members reflected after a visit: “Many of the schools are very seldom visited by anyone not directly involved in the school, apart from the mobile libraries, as attested to by the (lack of) entries in the visitors’ books.” The frustration on the side of the Resource Coordinator who wants to support, but on the other hand must observe protocol, was also noted during discussions.

In view of the challenges and concerns mentioned, and the nature of participatory action research to take action towards improvement, a number of initiatives and strategies emerged.

3.4 STRATEGIES TOWARDS IMPROVEMENT
The Mobile Operators and Library Assistants are the keys to the success of the mobile libraries. One library assistant explained:

“I am motivated to do this kind of job, the circumstances around are challenging and painful, but when you remember what you saw at the school, e.g. need, lack of knowledge, teacher dedicating herself/himself, you really want to be part of the success”.

It seems that the different Resource Coordinators take it upon themselves to contribute to the development of the mobile library staff members. One of the Library Assistants
explained: "Since I started here, we go to various workshops where they taught us how to use the books and the models that we are using currently". During the research project, the UFS also provided the Mobile Operators and Library Assistants with some training. One issue that was addressed was finding correct information ("training is most needed in this regard of library skills in order for us to make the correct recommendations to the teachers and the learners as well"), but some feel that they still need further clarity on reading strategies and on dealing with difficult customers and unresponsive schools.

In one district the mobile library staff members are planning to prominently display some non-fiction and age appropriate story books in order to stimulate interest in books that are not yet well known in the collection. Also, some Mobile Operators and Library Assistants informally talk to individual learners while they are browsing through displays and point them to books based on the interest of the learners. One Resource Coordinator decided to address this at the next training opportunity for the teachers at the DTDC. One district furthermore wants to also involve parents, and is therefore planning “a road show, maybe at a large school, and invite the parents. It is important that they see the value of reading”.

The mobile library staff members have a clear sense that in order for them to improve the service, it “is quite important to get honest feedback”, as most schools simply provide non-critical feedback on the monitoring tools.

It was suggested by one of the staff members that the Resource Coordinators should specifically provide “a workshop for the farm schools teachers on how to use library books complementary to the curriculum books”. Another suggested: “The teachers can be taught about this project. Some schools don’t know anything about this project”. It was also suggested that “marketing material to inform more people about the project” should be made available on different forums. It was further suggested that “we need to invite schools to the centre and give them proper training before including them in the programme”.

With the added understanding about research strategies, some of the buses have been stocked with multiple copies of the same book so that they can be used in shared reading. These are then pointed out to the Foundation Phase teachers in particular.

It is a problem that schools do not want learners to take the books home. One district is therefore in the process of obtaining kits from READ that will teach learners how to take care of library books. The only available kits are in English, and therefore not appropriate to the Foundation Phase learners. Still, they will follow up on that.

To overcome the challenge of books often not being available in African languages, some districts mentioned the possibility of translating the available English books for Foundation
Phase learners, and paste the indigenous language text on the same page as the English print [although it might be a contravention of copyright laws]. Not only will this allow learners to read in their mother tongue, but it will also create the opportunity for them to acquire English at the same time. This possibility needs to be followed up.

One district overcomes the problem of communication by providing information and other material in the pigeon holes where the salary slips of the schools are put for collection.

Even though it is not their responsibility, most of the Mobile Operators see their task as more than merely driving the buses. They also engage with the learners when they come to the bus to collect books, and in that way become a second set of Library Assistants in providing the service to the schools. Similarly, some of the Library Assistants are also in possession of the required driving licenses and PDP licenses, and can assist with the driving of the buses. In one of the districts is was reported that during the time when there was no Resource Coordinator, the library assistant, in addition to the work allocated to the post, assisted with some of the tasks of the Resource Coordinator.

To overcome the frustration of the manual, an official from the department indicated:

“For basic maintenance e.g. tyre pressure, oil, radiator water qualified drivers should be able to detect and resolve the above without a manual. For major maintenance issues, the bus can be referred to the Government Garage.”

To make up for the lack of internet sources at the schools ENCARTA was used. However, it has been discontinued due to a lack of funds, and soon the information in the current version will be outdated. Some of the Library Assistants have decided to collect educational DVDs so that they can show these to the learners when they visit the schools. They have devised ways of keeping in touch with learners’ needs:

“Sometimes it happens that the resources that [the teachers] are looking for we don’t have. We have a file that we put down the request and when we get to the resources centre we locate it from the library section and we take it with to the next visit. When they need information from the internet, we source it and find a way that it gets to the school”.

The research interviews provided opportunities to improve the service. For instance, one principal mentioned that learners do not have resources for specific assignments.

“The only thing is, when the learners search for information, they can’t find that. It would be good if you can come with the laptop, and the learners can
use it with you and search for information on the laptop or computer, and after searching you just give them the printout to be able to read for themselves”.

The response from the DTDC staff members was that if the request could be given to them in advance, they could pack a box of resources specifically for the assignments and bring it the next time they visit the school. One library assistant suggested that they could even put information on a flash drive, so that the learners would still be able to go through the information on the school’s computer and select what to use. They need to know what is going on in the curriculum and the work schedule, and what the needs of the schools are. Again, it was mentioned that due to a lack of telephone and internet facilities at the schools, communication between the schools and the mobile library staff members is limited.

The positive impact of having dictionaries available for the teachers was highlighted: “Learners are now creating their own dictionaries due to the use of the HAT [Afrikaans dictionary borrowed from the mobile library] in the classroom”.

From the above it is clear that the different role-players in the project engaged with issues towards finding solutions. Officials from the provincial office indicated their commitment to continue supporting the different DTDCs to address challenges.

4  REFLECTION FROM THE UFS STAFF MEMBERS

The importance of the role of the Mobile Operators and Library Assistants has become clear. These people are the link between the books and the children, and their professionalism and enthusiasm need to be applauded. Their commitment to the project and the learners was evident.

What we have observed when we joined some of the mobile libraries on their trips is that many hours go into driving the buses to remote schools. Looking at the visitors’ books, these staff members are often the only regular visitors to the schools. Even if this was the only contribution that they made, it would still be a worthwhile one. Undoubtedly, they are doing much more. While it is clear that some principals are simply not interested and see this service as an additional burden, most applaud the service.

Some of the schools are staffed by only one or two teachers. Other schools have more than 1 000 learners in the school with staff member:learner ratios of more than 1:40.

At one particular school that we visited, the school had only one teacher for grades 1-6. The UFS visitor narrated the following:
“The level of books that the grade 5 and 6 learners decided to take out worried me, because they really were very basic. I tried to have a conversation in English with the learners about the books, but they did not understand me. Even the simple question put to one learner: “How many grade 6 learners are there in the school?” caused confusion, and had to be translated into Sesotho before getting a response. I noted the concern to the Resource Coordinator that I cannot see how these learners will cope in senior phase in a bigger school, if they clearly do not understand English.”

After a visit to a different district, the UFS team member shared a similar experience:

“Engaging learners about how they felt about the mobile library was a bit more difficult than I anticipated. Apart from being shy, it seems that very few learners had enough confidence to speak English. Instead after asking the learners a question it was mostly the teachers who replied to me.”

Another school that we visited grew in 4 years from roughly 300 learners to the current number of 1050 learners. In the intermediate phase some classes experienced overcrowding as these classes had to accommodate between 50 and 70 learners. Furthermore, the classrooms of the school are all temporary structures (containers) which presents its own challenges. For example, as they are not insulated, the temperature range in the classrooms tends to be extreme. The school also does not have running water or electricity. During the past year it has, however, received a solar powered classroom donated by Samsung. The school therefore currently makes use of the electricity generated by the solar panels of the donated (container) classroom to provide electricity to the most important equipment at the school.

There seems not to be a common understanding regarding the schools that need to be served. SAPESI clearly stated that this is a primary school initiative, primarily meant for small schools. While this needs to be set out clearly in guidelines to allow the project to work towards its goal, the Resource Coordinators’ task goes beyond the mobile libraries, which causes tension.

The following suggestions can be considered:

- Using schools that only see this as an additional responsibility instead of an opportunity does not make sense. Rather let the schools who want to be part of the project apply to be part of this.
• Consider visiting fewer schools but on a more regular basis, enhance reading practices, work towards print-rich environments and in the end assist the schools to establish their own libraries if possible.

• The mobile libraries and the Resource Coordinators can join forces with the curriculum division, and then work more actively with the teaching staff to improve teaching, learning and reading practices within the challenging multi-grade setup. Alternatively, if the curriculum division’s staff members are not able to tend to the smaller schools, the Resource Coordinator must be allowed to engage on behalf of them (but I am not sure if protocol will allow this).

5 Guidelines

One of the outcomes of the research project was the development of Guidelines for Mobile Bus Library Services (MoLis) (See Addendum I). Issues that are addressed in the guidelines include aspects such as the Vision and Mission of the project, staffing, roles and responsibilities, guidelines on library material and equipment, procurement, operations and monitoring. In line with recommendations by Pillay (2006) the implementation of the policy will be monitored, and the policy will be reviewed after a year.

6 District Reports

Towards the end of the project, each district wrote a district report in which they were asked to report on the following:

• Background (particular unique features of the district)
• How the mobile bus operates
• Strengths of the service
• Challenges
• Improvements (either implemented or intended)

It is clear from the reports that not all districts are on par as far as their implementation of PAR is concerned. It became clear that in those districts where the same Resource Coordinators and media subject advisors were part of the project from start to finish, the results are the best. However in a few of the districts, there were either a change of staff, or staff members withdrew from the project. For PAR to be successful, commitment throughout is essential. Nevertheless, improvements can be seen to a lesser and greater extent in most of the districts. The main findings in the various district reports were incorporated in this report under (3).
7 DISSEMINATION OF THE FINDINGS

For research to have meaning, it needs to be disseminated on as many platforms as possible. Firstly, this report will be made available to relevant stakeholders. Secondly, the findings were presented at different stages:

7.1 SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE: OCTOBER 2015
Olga Lekitlane, Norman Proctor, Anna-Marie Jonker, Ernst Stals, Lieve Leroy and Lynette Jacobs presented a paper entitled “We take library books to farm schools: Appraising the work of the Mobile Libraries” at the third Annual SAERA Conference hosted by the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, between 27-30 October 2015.

7.2 XIV ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE BULGARIAN COMPARATIVE EDUCATION SOCIETY (BCES)
Lynette Jacobs presented a paper entitled “Providing Books to Rural Schools through Mobile Libraries” on behalf of the comprehensive research team at the BCES conference, 14 - 17 June 2016, in Sofia, Bulgaria. A paper was published in the peer reviewed conference book, and can be obtained at http://bces-conference-books.org/onewebmedia/2016.1.058-064.Lynette.et.al.pdf. Her travelling was partially sponsored by the National Research Foundation.

7.3 2ND BIENNAL SLYSIG CONFERENCE. UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE, BLOEMFONTEIN
Representatives (listed below) presented a plenary session entitled “Books on wheels. Bringing books to rural primary schools in the Free State: a series of opportunities”, at the abovementioned conference in Bloemfontein, 28 – 29 June 2016. It was presented in the form of a colloquium, with Annamarie du Preez being the convenor of the session:

- Creating opportunities: Japan and SAPESI - Mr Tad Hasunuma (SAPESI)
- Embracing the opportunity: The FSDoe - Ms Joyce Mohlodi (FSDoe)
- Using the opportunity: A day on the road with a Mobile Library - Mr Norman Proctor (Lejweleputswa District)
- Opportunities to create knowledge: The PAR project – Dr Lynette Jacobs (UFS & VVOB)
- Opportunity to improve: Reflecting on the work that is done - Ms Sharon Swanepoel (Fezile Dabi District)
- Opportunity to grow: Start-up libraries - Mr Mojaki Mahura (FSDoe).
7.4 **Readers to Leaders Ceremony**

The closing ceremony of the PAR project coincided with the launch of start-up libraries. On Thursday 22 September 2016, a function was held at the President Hotel in Bloemfontein. Representatives from the districts presented their work in a presentation *Books on wheels: Mobile Library Research Findings*. While the findings of the project were presented to dignitaries from the corporate sector, the public sector as well as the academe, 15 start-up libraries were also donated to schools previously served by the mobile libraries. Certificates were handed over to the Resource Coordinators as well as the Media Subject Advisors for the contribution that they made to the project. Learners from one of the schools in the project demonstrated their reading skills, much to the delight of the audience.

![Figure 13: Learners from Stilte Primary School with their teacher](image)

8 **Recommendations for Further Research**

The PAR approach was selected for two reasons. Firstly, it is an enabling approach that builds capacity towards research and becoming self-reflexive practitioners. Secondly, because there is a scarcity in terms of publications on the mobile libraries, the need existed to first get the basic information published. This opens up opportunities for further research.

The expected outcome of any PAR project is for the project to be sustainable after formal completion. During the PAR project practitioners learn to be reflective, to look at their own circumstances and to seek ways to improve their practice. However, due to work pressure, it is easy to relapse into former practices. The onus is now on the different districts, under the leadership of the provincial office, to maintain the practice, and to regularly reflect on their
achievements and successes in an enabling environment, with the support provided by SAPESI and other sponsors. Reporting can be done by the different role-players at an annual meeting. Hopefully this practice will also influence other divisions, and will strengthen the work in the Free State Province.

We however also recommend that a follow-up comparative study is done, tracking school visits, the level of engagement and learner achievement. Tracking learners from schools that were part of the project, when they go to secondary schools might also lead to further insights.

9 CONCLUSION

The aim of the mobile libraries is to provide learners and teachers at rural and farm schools with books in order to improve literacy levels, and that is what they are doing as best they can. The mobile libraries cannot make up for current challenges in teaching and learning or infrastructure, but the children and the teachers are provided with resources to encourage reading and stimulate literacy development. In the long run, this will surely impact on the general performance of learners as indicated in the introduction.

It is clear that the success of the project depends on the actual people involved. Where you have an enthusiastic mobile library staff corps who is passionate about books and reading, it motivates others. If you have teachers who see this as an education opportunity, and a possibility to engage learners in a meaningful way, it makes a huge difference. However, if this service is seen purely as the delivery of books by the mobile library staff, or as an additional responsibility for teachers, it becomes mere routine.

10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to acknowledge all the role-players in the project:

- We wish to show appreciation for the sponsorship of VVOB for the research project, and express our gratitude for the manner in which they created an enabling environment - also for the UFS members.

- The following people were participant researchers and partners in the project:
  - From the Free State Department of Education: Ernst Stals, Mojaki Mahura, Joyce Mohlodi, Thandie Ndumndum, Sharon Swanepoel, Lida Weideman, Olga Lekitlane,
Norman Proctor, Anna Marie Jonker, Bomkazi Nuku, Sussie Seutloali, Nomvula Dhlamini, Chantelle Rose, Cingiswa Shinta, Kenzo Mohajane and Sarie Du Plessis

- **From SAPESI**: Tad Hasunuma
- **From VVOB**: Lieve Leroy, Loran Pieck and Wilfried Theunis
- **From the University of the Free State**: Juliet Ramohai, Colwyn Martin, Frans Kruger, and Annamarie du Preez

- **Once-off contributions were also made by the following UFS staff members during the workshops**: Prof Sechaba Mahlomaholo, Drs. Willy Nel and Julia Ramabenyane.

- We want to acknowledge the contributions by the Mobile Operators, the Library Assistants, and the various schools, who are at the heart of the project.

### 11 BIBLIOGRAPHY


Addendum A: Programmes of the training sessions

Mobile Library Project
Training programme
24-25 November 2014
Winkie Direko Building 144
University of the Free State

Monday 24 November
9:45-10:30 Arrival, Registration & Refreshments
10:30-11:00 Welcome
11:00-13:00 Session 1: Doing research
13:00-13:45 Lunch
13:45-15:15 Session 2: Participatory Action Research
15:15-15:45 Refreshments
15:45-17:00 Session 3: Engaging with people when we do research

Tuesday 25 November
9:00-10:30 Session 4: Research to improve the practice of the Mobile Libraries
10:30-11:00 Refreshments
11:00-13:00 Session 5: Putting it all into practice
13:00-13:45 Lunch
13:45-14:45 Session 6: The way forward
14:45-15:00 Refreshments
### Mobile Library Project
#### Training programme
##### 17 June 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 11:00</td>
<td>Registration, Refreshments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-11:30</td>
<td>PAR and how to engage on an equal level</td>
<td>Prof Sechaba Mahomaholo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-12:15</td>
<td>Understanding the concept 'reading' at the Foundation Phase: Sharing ideas</td>
<td>Julia Ramabenyane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30 – 14:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00-15:30</td>
<td>Revisiting the Monitoring form &amp; planning the observation sheet</td>
<td>Colwyn Martin &amp; Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:30-16:00</td>
<td>Planning for Cycle 2</td>
<td>Lynette Jacobs &amp; Juliet Ramohai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00 – 16:15</td>
<td>Refreshments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:15-17:30</td>
<td>Role-play</td>
<td>All participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mobile Library workshop 3: Analysing data

The purpose of the workshop is to:

- Draw inspiration from the Cuba literacy campaign
- Learn how to analyse qualitative data. In particular, how to:
  - Identify Themes
  - Identify data that relate to the themes
  - Identify possible gaps in the data
  - Identify aspects of the Mobile library programme that could be improved
- Write a basic research report based on the data

Programme for the day:

8:00-8:05 Welcome
8:05-8:15 Literacy campaign in Cuba
8:15-10:00 How to identify themes from your data
10:00-10:15 Refreshments
10:15-11:15 Identifying data that relate to your themes
11:15-11:45 Gaps in the data – what is not there?
11:45-12:30 Identify aspects where there is room for improvement
12:30-13:15 Lunch
13:15-15:00 Writing a basic research report from the data
15:00 Departure
# Mobile Library workshop Operators and Library Assistants

19 January 2016, UFS

Programme for the day:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:15</td>
<td>Welcome and tea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15-10:45</td>
<td>Recap of the project</td>
<td>Dr L Jacobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-11:30</td>
<td>Sharing session</td>
<td>Mobile Operators and Library Assistants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-12:15</td>
<td>Child development / how to interact with children in a classroom</td>
<td>Dr Willy Nel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15-13:00</td>
<td>Reading strategies</td>
<td>Frans Kruger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00-13:45</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:45-14:30</td>
<td>Role play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:30-15:15</td>
<td>Finding information in books</td>
<td>Annamarie du Preez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:15-16:00</td>
<td>How to take care of books</td>
<td>Annamarie du Preez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00-17:00</td>
<td>Reflection on current practice</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Addendum B: Interview questions

SCAFFOLDING THE RESEARCH DISCUSSIONS

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the value of the mobile libraries and how can the service offered by the MoLis be improved?

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

To appraise the service offered by the MoLis and how it is used, towards improvement.

SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS (LINK WITH PAR CYCLE)

1. What are the realities of managing, operating and using the MoLis in our district? (Initial observation & reflection) (Also why and how).
2. How can we address the challenges and weaknesses that came to the fore? (Planning)
3. What is the effect of implementing the planned changes? (Action & Monitoring)
4. What is the value of the MoLis in our district and how can the service offered by the MoLis be improved further? (Reflection)
1. WHAT ARE THE REALITIES OF MANAGING, OPERATING AND USING THE MOBILE LIBRARY’S IN OUR DISTRICT? (INITIAL OBSERVATION & REFLECTION).

- Discussions with Resource Coordinators (RC), Library Assistants (LA) & Teachers who use the service
- Observations by RCs & LAs & Teachers
- Existing monitoring tool
- Discussions with teachers at the new schools on their needs and expectations
- WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES, STRENGTHS AND THE WEAKNESSES OF THE CURRENT MODE OF DELIVERY

2. DISCUSSION PROMPTS CYCLE 1

- QUESTIONS THAT MEDIA SUBJECT ADVISORS ASK THE RC

1. How many schools are your concentrating on and why, and how many times can the learners take the book. (Time frame etc.)
2. How many books can learners borrow at a time?
3. How do you organise the collection in the MoLis and why?
4. How do you deal with the situation when the bus breaks down?
5. Do you have a guiding policy for the MoLis?
6. Are there mechanisms in place in term of getting feedback from the schools you are servicing?
7. How do you deal with the feedback?
8. Is there a way in which you check the relevance and usefulness of the books that are used by the learners and teachers?
9. What selection criteria do you use to choose the schools that you service and why?
10. What activities do you do to ensure/promote that the resources are used to its potential?
11. Are lessons prepared based on the resources to integrate them into language development?
12. Do we have enough resources for all the subjects?
13. Language is used across the curriculum. How do we support the learners across the curriculum?
14. What are the realities regarding the budget to allow you to continue with the MoLis?
15. How do we ensure that there are resources on the MoLis to assist teachers in their professional development?
16. How do the LAs and the RC work together to select resources?
17. What expertise do the LAs have in terms of books, reading and the teaching and learning dynamics of the schools that they visit?
18. How do you assist in the development of the LAs towards what is expected of them in their work?
19. How do vacancies in posts influence service delivery?
20. To what extent, and how, are we catering for home languages and what are your challenges in this regard?
21. Do you feel that you are giving an effective service, given the challenges that you face regarding the project? Please explain.
22. After two years, when the service is terminated to a school, how do we and could we ensure sustainability of the library service?
23. What other challenges, frustrations and joys do you want to share?
24. Which good practices can you share?

• QUESTIONS TO LAS & THE MOBILE LIBRARY OPERATORS

1. What is your role in the Mobile library project?
2. How well do you know the resources on the MoLis, and how do you go about to know it?
3. How comfortable are you in assisting teachers to find appropriate resources, and what are your needs in this regard?
4. How involved are you in the operation of LIBWIN and what are your experiences in this regards?
5. What are the needs at your schools?
6. What are your experiences working on the project, as well as the challenges and the strengths?
7. What can we do to improve the service that we offer?
8. What are the attitudes of the teachers/schools towards the MoLis?
9. Why are teachers sometimes hesitant to visit the MoLis?
10. How much does the school know about the MoLis?
11. How do you deal with difficult dynamics with schools?
12. What mechanisms can we put in place to enhance/promote the service that we deliver through the MoLis?
13. Do you service a special school, and if so, what are the special needs and challenges in this regard?
14. Do you service schools that are part of the hostel project, and if so, what are the special needs and challenges in this regard?
15. How should we go about informing new schools about the project?

• QUESTIONS TO TEACHERS

1. How do you use the Mobile library resources?
2. What would you like to see added to the collection (relevance, home language, level, contextualised, etc.)?
3. How do the MoLis contribute towards a culture of reading in your classroom?
4. What is the contribution of the MoLis towards improving teaching and learning?
5. What are the views of your colleagues and yourself about the MoLis?
6. How are the library books used to assist in implementing reading strategies?
7. Are the MoLis functioning as you would want them to function, and what would you like to change?
8. How much freedom do the learners have to make choices in terms of the books they get to read?
9. What other benefits (e.g. social) are there for the learners?
10. How should we go about informing new schools about the project?
11. What problems, challenges and joys do you experience regarding the MoLis?
12. What aspects of the MoLis are working, and why do these aspects work?
13. How do you view the service and knowledge of the LAs?
14. What are your needs with regard to PD and how do/can the MoLis assist?
15. What other comments do you have regarding the MoLis?

• QUESTIONS TO NEW SCHOOLS

1. What do you know about the MoLis?
2. Why do you want to be part of it?
3. What do you expect of the MoLis and what are your specific educational needs?
4. In what way do you think the MoLis can help you to address your learners’ literacy level?

3. OBSERVATIONS CYCLE 1

• MSA’s? RCs? LA’s? Teachers?
• Potential of current monitoring tool?
• Reflections:
  o Continuous – everywhere – every step, every phase
  o In writing
  o Own thoughts
  o Procedures and occurrences

4. HOW CAN WE ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES AND WEAKNESSES IN THE PROGRAMME? (PLANNING)

• Own reasoning and problem solving
• Literature
• Consultations

5. WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF IMPLEMENTING THE PLANNED CHANGES? (ACTION & MONITORING)

• Implement the plan
• Observe and monitor the effect of the changes
• Reflect and record

FROM CYCLE 1 TO CYCLE 2 (JUNE 2015)

• What is the value of the MoLis in my district and how can the service offered by the MoLis be improved further? (Reflection)
  o Report back at the UFS
Addendum C: Observation sheet

Teacher: ________________________________ Grade: ____________ Date: ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Evident</th>
<th>Not Evident</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Library:</td>
<td>The classroom library corner/centre and its contents are in a good condition.</td>
<td>• Types of books: non-narrative, narrative, picture books, second language books and chapter books.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety / quantity of books</td>
<td>Variety and quantity of books for learners</td>
<td>• Books match the interests and needs of learners.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sufficient books for all children.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Books are displayed in an organised and simple way.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Level of books – challenging, supporting independent reading.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom climate conducive to</td>
<td>The classroom environment is</td>
<td>• There is a reading and language policy in the school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>Evident</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
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| reading development.        | conducive to reading development.                                         | • There is a classroom reading programme.  
• Time is set aside and indicated on the timetable for reading development.  
• There is a remedial programme to assist learners with barriers to reading.  
• Reading strategies and skills are modelled and prompted during instruction time.  
• Different reading strategies are used: Reading aloud, shared reading, group reading, and independent reading. |         |             |          |
| Management                  | Effective monitoring of reading development.                              | • Teacher listens to children read.  
• Time is set aside for independent reading.  
• Students use books from the library for reading and writing activities. |         |             |          |
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Evident</th>
<th>Not Evident</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners involvement in reading</td>
<td>Learners are reading at their expected level</td>
<td>• Learners are given opportunities to engage with the books they have read by being asked to share or summarise what they have read with others.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td>of reading development.</td>
<td>• Reading assessments show an improvement in reading comprehension and fluency.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Learners are showing an improvement in academic performance. (See reading assessment of ANA tests).</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading strategies:</td>
<td>Balanced literacy programme</td>
<td>• Was the story introduced meaningfully?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading aloud</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Were key words introduced?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Were key words well chosen?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Were key words explained?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Was understanding checked?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Was the story related to learners’ lives?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Were learners able to identify key information, key</td>
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<td>Category</td>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Indicator</td>
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<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td></td>
<td>characters and main ideas in the story?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>comments</td>
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Addendum D: Motheo district report

BACKGROUND (PARTICULAR UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE DISTRICT)

With the introduction of Resource Based Learning and Teaching in the New Curriculum Statements (NCS), and Outcomes Based Education (OBE), the school library services became indispensable of all schools to realize the envisaged outcomes. The was a vast shortage of library services in schools due to a shortage of funds as well as manpower to assist in establishment of the services in most of the schools in the Motheo District.

Introduction of the Mobile Library Services Project by the Free State Department of Education through the Education Resource Centre was of the utmost importance to establish a learner-centred approach to OBE and curriculum enrichment to establish the culture of life–long learning.

Through extended network between the Free State Department of Education and the SAPESI group led by Tad Tadashi Hasunuma, the MEC of Education then, Mme Ouma Tsopo received a donation of the first mobile bus in the Free State and was forwarded to the Education Resource Centre and was endorsed by Mr. Stals.

The Project started in April 2007 in 20 schools in the Motheo District. These were said to be disadvantaged and the bus was expected to service the schools at least once every week. This is how the project actually took off till to date.

HOW THE MOBILE BUS OPERATES?

The bus travels with the Mobile operator and the Assistant Librarian. The mobile library service in the Motheo District is provided to 76 schools which are mainly in disadvantaged or underprivileged areas. The bus visits each school three times a term or once every month.

Participating schools are required to sign the Service Level Agreement (SLA) on acceptance of the project to commit to establishing functioning library service at the school, to maintain training received during visits to these schools and to stick to reading programmes as arranged during the project to maintain developed skills. The visits are pre scheduled and schools are given programmes on when the next visit will be. The main purpose of these visits is to circulate library materials.

STRENGTHS OF THE SERVICE

- Library Assistants are trained on how to process books.
• The bus manages to reach the target when it is in good condition.
• Learners get excited to see the bus
• The child’s need from the most disadvantaged areas are satisfied.
• Getting too far reaching areas where the resources are very scarce.
• Schools are trained on the use of mobile bus.
• Books are arranged in such a way that is easier for learners to get books. They are classified according to reading level of learners e.g. Foundation or level 1, Intermediate or level 2 and Senior or level 3.

CHALLENGES

• The bus is not in good condition
• The spare parts of the Mobile library have to be ordered over-seas, as a result delivery takes a long time, so that is affecting the mobile service.
• Teachers complain about the time, for that reason everything is done quickly.
• Resources are limited.
• Most schools request reading books in native languages, i.e. Sotho, Setswana etc. But due to the department’s financial constraints, there is a lack of acquisition thereof.

IMPROVEMENTS (EITHER IMPLEMENTED OR INTENDED)

• Need more books for Maths and Science, Sotho and Setswana books.
• Advertise the project to schools, mouth to mouth marketing
Addendum E: Lejweleputswa Report

Lejweleputswa District

Mobile Library Action
Research Project:
Final report

Compiled by:
A. Jonker
T.O. Lekitlane
N.Proctor
Mobile Library Action Research Project:

Final report

Table of Contents

1. Background ........................................ 1

2. How the Mobile Library Operates ............... 1

3. Methodology ..................................... 1

4. Report based on data analysis ..................... 2
   4.1 Quality and quantity of resources ............ 2
   4.2 Social benefits ................................ 2
   4.3 Reading strategies ............................. 2

5. Challenges ....................................... 4

6. Improvements .................................... 4
   6.1 Implemented .................................. 4
   6.2 Intended ..................................... 5

7. Discussion and conclusion ......................... 5
Mobile Library Action Research Project

Final report

1. Background

The Mobile Library Project was started in Lejweleputswa in 2008 with one Mobile Library and its staff of one driver and one library assistant, to service rural schools. The number of schools serviced was increased in 2012 with the provision of another bus as well as another driver and library assistant.

The primary objective was to provide resources to learners and teachers in under-resourced rural areas, and thereby improve literacy levels.

These rural farm schools are within a radius of 100 kilometres from the DTDC. They are situated far from municipal libraries, and have few of their own resources and a limited budget to purchase resources. The services of the Mobile Library were intended to fill this void. The Mobile Libraries received their resources from Sony International, the Free State Education Library and the Lejweleputswa DTDC Library.

With the introduction of the Action Research Project in 2014, two target schools were chosen to analyse the impact of the service. One of these schools was currently being serviced by the Mobile Library at the time of selection, while the second school was newly introduced to the project.

2. How the Mobile Library operates

In collaboration with the Mobile Library staff of both busses, the Resource Co-ordinator sets up a quarterly programme of when the schools will be visited for the issuing and returning of resources. The resources from the DTDC are used to stock the Mobile Libraries according to the needs of the schools visited.

3. Methodology

Participants:

- District Teacher Development Centre Staff, i.e. the Resource Co-ordinator, the Media Subject Advisors and the Mobile Library staff;
- Teachers from two selected schools;
- Faculty of Education staff from the University of the Free State.
Information was gathered by means of interviews with stakeholders, as well as classroom observations.

Interview questions were based on the following themes:

- Quality and quantity of resources
- Social benefits
- Reading strategies

4. Report based on data analysis

From the analysis of the data collected hereby, the following emerged:

4.1 Quality and quantity of resources

Both participating schools identified a need for more resources. In particular they need picture books (*the little ones, they like books with pictures.*) and also non-fiction material such as *atlases and dictionaries.* It was also suggested that *posters related to the big books* will be useful. These resources should not be limited to books, but should include a variety of multimedia resources (*also a globe and a world map*) and electronic resources (*they must be able to search for the information when they are giving the assignments*).

4.2 Social benefits

The social benefits are clearly seen in both schools. *Sharing ideas and friendship* was an important aspect, as reading helps learners to be able to communicate with others at ease, and *they have something in common to talk about.* *Learners would sit together that would never sit together and read the one book. They share the same book… they talk together.*

The social benefits of reading were continued even after school. Learners from one school were able to read with their parents, and in this way the parents would become aware of what the child is doing at school. Furthermore, the general knowledge of the parents themselves is extended by reading the books together with their children. (*Because they find that one day they are retelling the story to their mother, to their parents. They also give us information on that when they know what the child is reading about.*)

4.3 Reading Strategies

By providing enough resources to the schools, the Mobile Library enables them to better make use of different reading strategies to promote and teach reading.
Both schools used independent reading as a strategy as observed by the researchers when visiting the two schools, (It increases vocabulary of the learners and independent reading, where learners can read on their own… Learners choose books of their own interest and read it), while one school allowed the learners to take the books home to reinforce what was taught at school (Sometimes take it to go and read at home). Group reading, shared reading and paired reading was also observed at both schools, with learners using books provided by the Mobile Library.

Extension of reading activities was carried out through vocabulary charts displayed on the classroom walls. Sequencing, summarising and comprehension was covered through activities such as retelling of the story, formal written book reports and mind-mapping charts. (It also brought the skills of recount where a child can retell a story and sequencing.)

The service of the Mobile Library has helped a lot to improve the classroom to be conducive for learning and again it broadens the knowledge of the
learners. (*when you bring books, you are bringing new ideas to them. They are getting interested to reading the story.*)

Apart from enriching the classroom environment, it has also played a part in remedial activities that strengthen reading skills amongst the learners. (*It really makes a difference... The joys that learners who were struggling to read, can now try to read at their own.*)

5. **Challenges**

- The roads are rural, remote, and dusty. Poor weather conditions such as rain impact on accessibility and service delivery.
- Although the books are secured on the shelves by railings and bookstands, poor road conditions can cause them to become dislodged and to fall off the shelves.
- One of the Library Assistants was transferred to the Examinations Section during the period of the research, which impedes service delivery.
- Expiry dates of licence discs are reported well in advance to the Transport Section, but new discs are usually received late.

6. **Improvements**

6.1 Implemented

- The learners and teachers are exposed to a wider variety of resources, both fiction and non-fiction, as well as mother-tongue and additional language resources, as requested by them. Most of the requests for different resources were met, e.g. more dictionaries, atlases and a globe of the world. As a result of exposure to a wider variety of resources, an improvement in language and reading skills is evident. Since the mobile
library visits, the learners are more prepared to read confidently and without hesitation to the mobile library staff, as well as to the researchers.

- Learners, parents and teaching staff are able to celebrate literacy days meaningfully because of the availability of resources (e.g. books are read on the verandah at one school by learners and parents for Library Week)
- Teachers are also taking newspapers to schools as a result of the mobile library having made them aware of the use of resources other than just books
- Classrooms have become more print–rich as a direct result of visits from the mobile libraries. Posters (bought and made) are evident on the walls, together with vocabulary and other charts, instructions on how to compose book reports and mind maps, all of which stimulate the learners visually and encourage them to read.
- From the first research visit in January 2015 up to June 2016, an improvement has been noticed in the language and mathematical skills of the learners and teachers due to the exposure to and interaction with educational toys. The Resource Coordinator has noticed an enhancement of fine motor coordination, gross motor skills and comprehension skills in the practical work that she has done with them during visits to the school with the mobile library.
- As a direct result of the mobile library project, some of the schools involved have received donations of resources for start-up libraries, housed at the schools themselves.
- Based on impressions and remarks of the teachers, the impression was created that the marks have improved as a result of the mobile bus project.

4

6.2 Intended

- The mobile libraries should include exposure to electronic research and educational games to teach information skills and computer skills, as part of their service to schools. Wifi Internet access would make this more viable.
- Through the mobile library’s wifi Internet service, schools could also be encouraged to take part in the Fundza and Nali’Bali programmes, entitling them to free online resources to increase their reading stock. These resources can assist with the establishment of reading clubs at the rural schools. Children can be encouraged in this way to write their own stories for posting on these sites, thus developing both readers and writers.
- Representatives from Nali’Bali can be approached to assist with training teachers on the establishment and maintenance of book and reading clubs at the rural schools.

7. Discussion and Conclusion
This report set out to analyse the impact of the mobile library project in the Lejweleputswa district. Through interviews and observations, needs and opportunities were identified in the areas of quality and quantity of resources, social benefits and reading strategies.

DTDC staff involved in the mobile library programme were developed and capacitated based on needs identified by the research project. The researchers themselves were developed by being exposed to Participatory Action Research, which they will be able to employ in other aspects of their work in order to enhance service delivery.

Based on the analysis of the data it is evident that the mobile library project has had a positive impact on the schools visited. There is an improvement in the reading and language abilities of the children, and their confidence and social skills are enhanced as a result.

The researchers would like to thank the UFS, VVOB, SAPESI, Sony and the Department of Education for the opportunity to take part in this research project and to be able to attend and present at conferences related to the work being done. The project has added both value and meaning to our work.
Addendum F: Xhariep district report

Mobile library report Xhariep District

I am Sarie du Plessis, Subject Advisor for the sub directorate ELITS (Education Library and information Services) in the Xhariep District

Describe the work that you are doing (describe the detail of your operations).

Background

There are four levels of library and information services in the education system, namely national, provincial, district and school level. These levels must work in synergy to ensure access to quality library and information services for all. School Library and Information Services at district level form part of the other support services within a district.

Responsibilities of a Library Advisor

School library advisors: visit schools, run workshops, organise advocacy events and provide guidance regarding School Library and Information Services.

I am responsible for the following services in the Xhariep District.

• providing professional support through visits to schools;
• implementing the National Guidelines for School Library and Information Services;
• supporting all development models in School Library and Information Services
• providing guidance and support in respect of budgeting and procurement to support Schools
• providing guidance and support in maintaining and managing core collections of all development models
• providing guidance and support with the implementation of national information literacy programmes;
• providing an advocacy strategy for the schools and district;
• providing training in the effective utilisation of school library and information resources;
• promoting networking with local NGOs, publishers and other partners as well as the public/community libraries;
• monitoring and reporting to the district management as well as provincial Departments of Education.
(In my own words)
I support schools to establish and maintain functioning school libraries at the different schools in the Xhariep District. I am responsible for the training of teachers on information skills and the use of multimedia resources in the classroom. Support the integration of information literacy with, and the promotion of reading into the National Curriculum. I also capacitate teachers on reading strategies and support them to foster a reading culture in their classrooms and at their schools. I am responsible to monitor the implementation of partnership projects related to ELITS in the districts. Training of teacher librarians in library administration in schools where functional school libraries are in schools. Coordinating local and international library days and events in consultation and partnership with other government departments, the provinces and other relevant stakeholders; Promote reading in schools e.g. celebrate special days, reading competitions, book review, debate as well as Spelling Bee competitions for different grades. I am also responsible for supporting schools with the access to and use of Information and Communication Technology in schools libraries. School visits to monitor and support the use of the mobile library as well as the administration and utilization of school libraries and the resources in the schools

List the issues that need improvement. Identify the aspects that need improvement and write down plans to deal with the challenges.

Issues that need improvement and suggestions to improve the service:

i. The technical support of the mobile library bus to ensure that the programme can be executed and the schools can be serviced accordingly. (Buses break down and the process of repairing the bus take a very long time)

ii. The programme: The mobile library can move on to service other schools, as schools progress towards developing their own School Library and Information Service.

iii. A big number of farm schools in the Xhariep District were closed. There are only 11 farm schools currently that the mobile bus must visit. Therefore a programme has been developed to include all the schools (72 schools) in the Xhariep District with mobile buses. The service can be improved by visiting less schools more regularly and develop dynamic learning programmes to support to the process of teaching
and learning. (The development of these programmes need to be done at national, provincial and district level to support the Assistant Librarians and Mobile Operators. Revisit the programme of school visits and develop a plan to visit not more than 18 schools per bus (as in other districts) as indicated in the report at the conference. Also look again at the criteria to include focus schools that can be visited at least 3 times per term and not once a term as currently the status quo. Thus more regular school visits to focus schools – development of the programme. (Specifically for Xhariep.)

iv. Capacitating Teachers by running workshops at focus schools to enable teachers to develop some of the following reading strategies: Print-rich classrooms; Library corners and how to use it effectively; Use resources to support CAPS/DEPARTMENT BOOKS; Motivate teachers to set an example for reading; Sending books home with learners.

v. Mobile Library Monitors at school level: Training of mobile library monitors (learners) at each school that can support the mobile staff with the library administration at schools.

vi. Annual update and evaluation of resources in the mobile library. The school’s stock of mobile library and information resources must be refreshed regularly and the selection must be based on the needs of the schools that are visited. Remove obsolete resources and replace with books in the mother tongue of the learners e.g. Xhariep Setswana, Sesotho and Afrikaans.

vii. Science Book Clubs: to support learners with Science Projects – there are a lot of Science books in the mobile libraries and learners need to learn how to use Non Fiction books.

viii. Developing a national information literacy programme. According to the CAPS document – learners need to use language to access and manage information for learning across the curriculum and in a wide range of other contexts. Information literacy is a vital skill in the ‘information age’ and forms the basis for life-long learning. This is a challenge that need to be included in the improvement plans at National level.
ix. District Level: Develop a manual to support the teaching of information skills in different phases (e.g. an information skills curriculum) to support the assistant librarians with activities at school level.

i. Information Age we need to have E-books available to support the schools with tablets and IPads with e-resources from the mobile library will be a great improvement. Learners with mobile phones can also download books.

ii. Development of Reading: The reading level of learners is an issue beyond the framework of the mobile libraries – the ability to read non-fiction. This include the development of vocabulary of learners to enable them to read e.g. science books that are available in the mobile library.

The success story of the Mobile Library in Xhariep District

i. At school level the mobile library provide learners and teachers with access to a wide variety of resources to support them with the curriculum.

ii. This service is really useful, especially in rural schools, when there is a lack of organisational capacity and a lack of space to establish a proper library. (This also include schools in small towns with a not enough of classroom space, no qualified librarians and not enough teachers.

iii. They expose learners to a new concept utilising resources (DDC-system of classification) and also instil a habit of reading for the purpose of both information and recreation. These habits unfortunately is only for the learners and teachers that utilise the service.

iv. A key function of the mobile library is to promote a culture of reading and in all the schools in the Xhariep District the mobile library played a crucial role in promoting reading. This is one of the biggest assets that the mobile library service bring to our district. Awareness.

v. The mobile library ensure the efficient organisation of the resources for easy access by the learners. They also maintain and manage the collections. This is a benefit that we sometimes take for granted. Teachers and learners are exposed to a well-managed library system in a bus. Learners are exposed to the DDC classification system or the different resources.
vi. Provide more than printed resources – the mobile library also provide schools with e.g. Science models, wall charts for a print rich classroom environment and lots of non-fiction resources to support classroom activities. Puzzles for the farm schools.

vii. The mobile library encourages learners to be independent learners by using the resources from the mobile library.

viii. The mobile library act as information points for enquiries and facilitating the lending and retrieval of library material – this is a great service.

ix. Sharing resources enables learners and teachers to access a wider range of resources.

x. The mobile library service that is organised by library staff members, can

I know that the mobile library service really add value to a lot of our rural schools and that more professional staff can add value to this service.
Addendum G: Thabo Mofutsanyane report
RESEARCH REPORT FOR THABO MOFUTSANYANA EDUCATION DISTRICT

N Dhlamini – Resource Co-ordinator Tshiya DTDC

Introduction

It is important to note that the MoLis operates only on schools with which a formal agreement with the department has been entered into. It is one of the crucial duties of the resource co-ordinator to identify the schools according to the policy, then a service level agreement is therefore signed between the department and the school as a gesture of confidence into the commitment made to a sound service delivery.

1. Daily operation of the Mobile Library

The Mobile Library is operating on school visits, following a scheduled routine, from Mondays to Thursdays of every week.

The departure time is generally 8:30 in the morning for the local and nearby school visits and 7:00am even 6:30am for far away schools placed in towns like Marquard, Clocolan, Ficksburg, Senekal, Petrus Steyn, Reitz etc.

Return time also differs in the same way, 14:000-16:00pm with local schools, and with far away schools even later with various reasons each time depending on weather conditions, state of the roads, performance of the bus etc.

Duration of each visit is two hours per school, excluding the travel between the centre and the schools, and time spent on moving from one school to the next.

The mobile library is visiting two to three schools per day.

Eighty schools are visited each month, grouped or clustered for convenience for both parties and smooth operating of the system.

The mobile operator(s) (drivers) are the ones responsible for ensuring all successful daily visits to schools, while the library assistant serves to make those visits worthwhile for the school communities through the relevant resources for education support, growth and expansion.

On school visits:

- The Mobile library gets systematically packed each morning with relevant resources for the types and levels of schools e.g. foundation, primary, and intermediate.

- On arrival, the library assistant reports to the principal’s office, wherein the logbook is normally signed as evidence of the visit, before she / he could ask to meet the mobile–coordinator of the school. The purpose of this is for smooth operating and time saving practices.
• As the bus arrives at the school, the mobile operator/driver exposes all the display spaces on the sides of the bus and on the inside shelves for easy access to all resources.

• Once the teachers arrive at the site of the bus, the library assistant begins with the core business of the Mobile library, exposing the client to resources and support. All clients are allowed to go through the displays on the shelves to choose their desired resources and take it to the issuing point where the library assistant is waiting to help them through the LIBWIN system using a scanner, laptop, and printer to complete the process.

• The mobile operator assists the teachers with taking the selected books to class or to the school library.

• The library assistant helps the clients with making extensive choices by introducing or availing relevant resources compliant to the clients request at the time.

• When learners are called to the bus for their turn to make their own choice of books, they are normally being lead through questions by the library assistant to check if they are literate or have an interest for reading. Reading is done on the bus during such incidents.

2. The work done by the mobile team:

Strength and good practices

• The mobile library project in TMED began to operate in 2006, and since then, it has never stopped or taken a break from servicing and supporting schools.

• The first group of 30 schools, which our bus first started with, have all established their own libraries, a chip on the shoulder as this has been amongst the main objectives of the project.

• The infrastructure of Tshiya DTDC is highly compliant with the recommendations of the ML project operational plan:
  - The drive-in bus libraries
  - Well complemented with bookshelves
  - Visibly marked and convenient space for the loading and off-loading of resources as the bus goes and returns from trips

• All our books and resources have been processed through the LIBWIN system, no unprocessed materials in view.

• We are the only centre so far, that has managed to service 80 schools per month (40 schools each per bus) as it has been recommended by the SAPESI office, and this has
been going on in full force for the past three years. Every school that is taken off our lists gets immediately replaced.

- Our monitoring and operating tools are so effective that we are able to deliver exactly what the client needs (request and recommendation tool, detailed issue form, and new tools for improvement plan).

- Due to that high target (80 schools), we are able to reach even the most rural and remote areas to resource the farm schools and train their teachers while ensuring the marketing of the project and the DTDC services in these scarcely serviced areas as we go by.

- Despite the introduction of the most discouraging new system in 2013/14 for procuring books and library materials, which has resulted in so much underspending by many sections into different districts, TMED-Mobile library has succeeded to spend 80% of the budget allocated the resources section, which has once more depicted TMED from the rest.

- The intervention trainings in Reading for the foundation and senior phase that are conducted in rotation with the Edu-toys trainings, have been identified by the present district director as the one of the valuable remedies to the gradual eradication of the district’s known challenge of poor reading statistics and bad performance in languages.

- We are making a point each year never to miss out on the honouring of national literacy events celebrations by organising redemption for the rural and farm schools every year, making sure that they too are awarded a platform to compete and participate with one another while leaning to embrace the notion of reading and a respect for the library.

- TMED is the biggest of the five districts, with 364 schools, (urban and rural) which are vastly scattered throughout. The two buses are servicing schools according to the planned programme which has been delivered to each school for convenience and smooth running.

- Open door policy is being practiced by the Mobile library’s staff through the operational system used which allocates teachers a choice to call the Library Assistants or the centre at any given day or time during work days to order or make arrangements for the resource(s) that they need to be supplied with.

- Regular trainings for farm school teachers, all brought together under one roof, has proven to be effective in the sharing of skills to use the resources, eradication of common problems, sharing and voicing own frustrations on the relevant platform whereby possible solutions or indications towards that might be found.

- Outreach to other schools which are not in the Mobile Library list is being achieved through Block Loan system which is offered to teachers in various schools for once-
off teaching events, to officials during workshops and to a group of teachers from those schools outside Phuthadijhaba, which can probably be done during school holidays and only on these days due to the lack of resources.

- The instant printout document that is given to each teacher after issuing out is done on the computer, has been proven effective in preventing unnecessary hustles when collection period comes, it also serves as reminder to the client that the ML team is professional and that the resources in their possession is a valuable departmental commodity that needs to be taken care of, for others to also benefit from.

- The resource section has got its own budget which has to be utilised over books and resources for the mobile library and the centre library. It is the duty of the resource co-ordinator to identify relevant resources suitable for everyone in the district:
  - The capacitation of the district officials
  - For the resourcing during workshops
  - For integration during teaching at schools
  - For general reference to everyone doing research

- Selection and submission for procurement of resources is being done by the resource co-ordinator with the help of the Library Assistants.

- Once line budgets has been committed, the RC makes regular follow ups with the procurement team of the district.

Issues that need improvement

- Reflection on collected data, gave us clues on how the project reflects to the world out there. Some comments are negative, while others are mostly positive even though some indications of suggested improvement are not left out (Morena Tshuhisi PS: Yes it has improved teaching and learning especially when children are using the chess board. It helps them to think quickly and respond to the questions) however few challenges like limited resources, limited loan period were identified (Yeh, the posters. They were having those posters nut they were not enough. Like our children are doing English so it can helps them a lot because they are bright and attractive to them)

Challenges

- Sign Language

- It’s difficult to notice whether a learner is deaf or not therefore creating problems for us because we do not know how to communicate with them.

- They want us to come between 3 – 4 pm and it is very late, beyond working hours for public officials.
• Hostel fathers and mothers are not teachers, they are responsible for the books so they need to attend training too, so that they are to monitor books afternoons and during weekends for the sake of the learners.

• Hostel officials need to be registered in the LIBWIN system for smooth circulation.

Special Needs

• Internet for research purposes.

• Electronic resources.

Wasted Energy

• The Principal of Thiboloha SCS has joined a trend of many high schools of dismantling the libraries, turning them into storerooms, classrooms, sleeping rooms for matric students’ results. The only difference here is that, with Thiboloha this special school used to be the only place most of these differently abled children used to enjoy away from the usual classroom to hostel routine. Another reason, the most vital in this aspect is the fact that the Thiboloha Library has been our baby (Tshiya Mobile Library) for it is to be born and be natured into what it became on the day of its launching, which was also much of Tshiya Mobile Library effort together with the schools very dedicated teacher librarian and team.

• A library of its own kind what was launched with such a breath taking service ceremony organised through exceptional sponsoring and on that occasion so much promises were made by the school and various speakers to uphold that gift to the benefit of the children and community. One can imagine of how disappointed everyone is at the moment due to the fact that the Principal has closed that library and turned it into an ordinary classroom due to lack of space as he claims.

• (Thiboloha CSS: This bus is not serving us at all, people like me that teaches the total blinds at senior phase)

Identified areas for improvement

• Ensuring that learners are allowed to take the books home
  
  o The issue mentioned above has got a lot of other issues involved which I have identified as key in contributing towards this challenge:

    ▪ Low/no budget for the MoLis

    ▪ Fear on the side of the teacher and the school to take responsibility of a damaged or lost book (they are careless with books, their parents also do not call them to order when they do so)

    ▪ The unexplainable discontinued donation of books for the MoLis by Sony
3. Improvement plans

Implemented

1. Monitoring tool for the hostel school children that has to be used by their housekeepers or household aids as they are better known.

Still to implement

2. Home reading tool for all children designed to involve parents’ signatures as evidence.
Addendum H: Fezile Dabi report
Sharon Swanepoel

Key: Teacher: T
Library Assistant: LA
Mobile library Operator: MO

MAIN THEMES

1. Good Practices and strengths:

- How the Mobile library Resources are used:

Foundation Phase

The Foundation Phase teachers prefer to take out Big Books for teaching in the class. They then use it according to the reading strategies required from them.

(T) “How I use it. The learners they first, maybe I took one Big Book. They discuss that Big Book, the picture and everything there. Then we... I read aaaa they first predict what they think the story is about by looking at the cover, then I read, they listen through, I read the book, they follow me, then they read after me. Then at the end of the aaaaa lesson there are activities there, they do activities”

After the teacher follows these steps the learners are able to read the story. (T)” but they can read these books.”

(T) When telling or reading stories to them, I always tell them the aspects before reading. They look at the book, book cover, and author, what the story is about, the characters...I think it does contribute a lot”.

The learners also get the opportunity to choose books and read it by themselves. This contributes to reading for enjoyment. The learners will read the book and when they are finished it will go back to the reading corner, where they can choose another book. (T) “use Mobile library resources by reading them together, a for enjoyment”

Intermediate Phase (Grade 4-6)

The books are used to implement some of the reading strategies. (T) “We use the books for reading, especially in class we make, we make group reading and then see which one they struggle, then we try to sort the group according to their improvement.” (T)” When telling or
reading stories to them, I always tell them the aspects before reading. They look at the book, book cover, and author, what the story is about, the characters...I think it’s contribute a lot.”

While the teacher is busy teaching one grade the other learner can go and choose a book to read from the reading corner to do silent reading. (T) “It is then that they have time to pick when I am busy with others.”

(T)” So the others if they are finished with their books they just exchange.”

- Impact of resources on (I)

All the teachers who took part in the research agreed that the MoLis contributed to the improvement of the First Additional Language of the learners.

(T)”Their reading approved a lot,,,,, it improved a lot”

(T) And they can read since we use this books, and you know, when they read these books some word they repeat themselves, high frequency words and sight words and they understand them.

The MoLis assist in the improving of their FAL, vocabulary and it is increasing the learners’ interest for individual reading.

The learners can identify the name of the book, the author the title and predict what the book is about.

(T)”the joys...are that they can open a book and tell what is the name of the book, title, author and that is the joy when I’ve seen that they understand that.”

(T)”With teaching it contributes a lot. When telling or reading stories to them, I always tell them the aspects before reading. They look at the book, book cover, author, what the story is about, the characters...I think it’s contribute a lot.”

- The learners start to enjoy reading.

Learners are looking forward to the Mobile Library visits. They are excited to get new books to read.

(T) “The Big Books they have the pictures, they enjoy looking at the pictures and want to hear what the picture is about, they enjoy reading”
The learners get familiar with what a library look like and what kind of books are in a library.

(T) Since the MoLis arrive they can get into the MoLis and choose books for themselves but you know the small children, they just look at the picture, so I as the teacher I enter with them to see that they choose the correct books

(T) “Bringing the books to them is the first aspect. Learners became familiar with what a library is because they didn’t know…”

(T) “What a library is like foundation for library”

(T)”The MoLis is helping us a lot because some of our children they are staying there at the farm, they don’t get that time to come here (Kroonstad) to the library and choose books and go and read. When the MoLis came they them help a lot. They have the time to read the storybooks.”

- Mobile library Staff

The teachers are satisfied with the service delivery of the Mobile Library Staff.

(T)“It is satisfied...yes it is satisfied, as I’ve said... I like it, they come regularly, monthly…”

(T)”...helping me...I am satisfied...they are assisting me...very well”

(T)” What I observed is how the books have been classed according to the standard, the level of the kids, even the assistant(MO) there , he assist us on how to choose the books, showing us this is for the grade 4, 5 ,”

1. Challenges:
- Time

Because of the multi-grade teaching at the PSPP schools some of the teachers experience challenges on the use of the resources. They do not have enough time to follow up on the individual reading of their learners.

(T)” I’m trying to use these MOBILE LIBRARY resources but cannot succeed so much because of my multigrade class. I teach from Gr 4 up to Gr 7.”

(T) “ There isn’t much time for to check and read with learners or explain individually that this type of book you’ve chosen is like this and this, so I need time, but at the same time there are
other learners that are being transported. When I see that 30 minutes after school the transport is already there and they must leave school....”

- Variety of resources (VR)

Due to the fact that most of the books are donations it is in English. We only have a few South Sotho books on the Mobile library which was bought for the DTDC library. Due to the budget limitations no books could be bought.

(T) Yes, I like most of them to be in their home language Sesotho and they can be in the Mobile truck and they can be grouped according to their classes”.

(T) Yes, they were relevant, I look the books on my phase, they are really relevant, even the kids are able to read on their own by looking at the pictures.

The teachers would also like to have other resources on the MoLis like:

(T) “Big Books, Sotho storybooks, puzzle, toys and charts”.

- CAPS/ Integration

The teachers are struggling to integrate the Mobile library Resources with CAPS

(T)”Hmmm...in the classroom I’m struggling with writing a time table for that multi-grade class...I do not know when grade 4’s should write...so...I do not have one now...I’m struggling...so I don’t have one now...I’m taking...there are so many ...I don’t know which one to use. I’m struggling with the time table.”

The teachers are very dependent on the Departmental Workbooks as everything is already worked out for them.

2. School Environment (SE)

In some of the schools the school environment also impact negatively on the effective use of the Mobile library Resources.

Some of the learners ate transported and had to leave directly after school. There is no time for an extra reading period.

(T)”there are other learners that are being transported. When I see that 30 minutes after school the transport is already there and they must leave school....”

There is no culture for reading at some of the schools
"they don’t take them seriously that the books will improve their reading skills and their language usage. They don’t have ... I don’t know ... they don’t have that favour of reading ... they are lazy ... when I’m busy with the other classes, I say: “take your library books and read them!” They don’t read them, they listen to what I’m busy with in the other classes. Maybe if we can have ... I don’t know ...”

In some cases the school layout is not conducive for reading activities.

"and that our school can maybe have a school building ... a classroom maybe when I’m busy with the others ... take their library books and go to the other room and read..."
Addendum I: Guidelines

GUIDELINES
FOR
MOBILE BUS LIBRARY SERVICES (MoLis)

FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction and background  
Vision for the mobile library  
Mission of the mobile library  
Physical security  
Purpose  
Entitlement of the service  
Stock  
Guidelines for using the mobile library  
Chapter 2: Staffing, Roles and Responsibilities  
2.1 Provincial Level  
2.2 District Level  
2.2.1 Centre Manager  
2.2.2 Resource Co-ordinator  
2.2.3 Media Subject Advisor  
2.2.4 Library Assistant  
2.2.5 Mobile Operator  
2.3 School Level  
Guidelines on library material and equipment  
2.3.1 School Principal  
2.3.2 Teacher(s)  
2.3.3 Hostel staff  
Chapter 3: Collection development  
3.1 Procurement of the resources  
3.2 Start-up libraries  
Chapter 4: Monitoring and Support  
4.1 Provincial Level  
4.2 District Level  
4.2.1 Centre Manager  
4.2.2 Resource Coordinator
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2.3 Media Subject Advisor</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5: Conclusion</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting structure</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revision of policy</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1: Introduction and background

Vision for the mobile library

A mobile library service that will implement an effective outreach programme to ensure that all rural schools in the Free State Province have access to a variety of learning and teaching resources for the attainment of reading and information skills.

Mission of the mobile library

To ensure that rural schools without libraries/media centres in the Free State Department Education districts have access to learning and teaching resources to support the effective delivery of the curriculum.

Physical security

The Centre Manager is responsible for ensuring that:

- The mobile library is properly secured by burglar proofing and proper door and roof protection;
- The security (alarm) system of the bus is always in a working condition;
- The bus keys are always in a safe place after hours; and
- No one is allowed to use the bus without permission.

Purpose

- To promote literacy, reading and resource-based learning.
- To maximise teacher capacity by integrating the use of appropriate, available and affordable library resources into the curriculum delivery process.
- To inculcate a culture of reading and library use among teachers and learners.
- To address the vast shortage of library books.
- To monitor and assist schools in using library services.
- To bring services to the doorstep of the most needy schools.
- To motivate schools to establish their own school libraries.

**Entitlement of the service**

The rules and procedures applicable to school library services will also apply to the mobile library service to schools, i.e. free membership to schools.

Teachers may borrow a number of items as agreed on by the DTDCs in the form of a block loan with the intention that learners will also be able to access the resources. In this option, a teacher must be identified as responsible for the block loaned items until they are collected again for exchange.

**Stock**

The mobile libraries will be stocked in phases. The first phase will include story/fiction and non-fiction books for relevant grades of the particular schools to be visited. The second phase will be decided by the resource co-ordinator based on the needs analysis and which includes other educational materials such as educational toys, DVDs and posters. This means that the resource co-ordinator, the Library Assistant and Mobile Library Operator need to conduct continuous surveys to establish the needs of the users of the mobile library.

**Guidelines for using the mobile library**

- The selected schools will have to sign a service level agreement with the DTDC.
- Schools will be notified of the mobile library’s visit in good time.
- Schools will select a teacher who will be the liaison officer between the school and the DTDC.
• The teacher will determine the needs of the school and inform the library assistant beforehand. Due to challenges around communication media, this information will be provided to the library assistant during the visit in preparation for the next visit.
• Users of the mobile library must show respect for the library staff at all times.
• They must use the bus and its contents with consideration.
• Users must be patient while the library assistant is helping other clients.
• Users must keep their voices down while using the library.
• Return library resources in time so that others can also utilise them.
• Report lost and/or damaged books to the principal and teacher who will inform the library assistant at the DTDC.
• Books lost or damaged owing to negligence must be replaced.
• The school is responsible for the good condition of the books/materials while they are at the school.

The development of these guidelines is informed by the following policy documents:

- National Development Plan Vision 2030
- Department of Basic Education national Guidelines for school Library and Information Services
- Free State Department Of Education Guidelines For Education Resource Centres (ERC)
- Free State Department Of Education Provincial Library And Information Services Policy
- University of the Free State-VVOB-Free State Department of Education Research on the Use of the MoLis
Chapter 2: Staffing, Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Provincial Level

- The Provincial staff must monitor and support the implementation of the Mobile Bus Library Services Guidelines,
- Advice on intervention strategies to ensure optimal use of the MoLis,
- Liaise and establish collaborations with potential donors and sponsors to ensure periodic rejuvenation of the collections in the MoLis

2.2 District Level

2.2.1 Centre Manager

- Must monitor and support the implementation of the Mobile Bus Library Services Guidelines.

2.2.2 Resource Co-ordinator

- Develops policy for effective utilisation of information and learning resources.
- Determines and monitors norms for allocation of information and learning resources.
- Ensures that the centre acquires and makes available relevant materials for classroom use as well as teacher development. Such materials would be available for copying or loan.
- Keeps up to date with the available resources/developments, testing such resources and acquiring those considered relevant and effective.
- Helps teachers develop more effective ways of using the limited resources they have, under their conditions of work.
- Provides information resources to learners and teachers in under-resourced rural areas through the mobile library.
- Ensures systematic arrangement of resources in the mobile library before undertaking a trip.
- Assists in the planning of the routes to be followed by the mobile library bus daily.
- Ensures that the mobile library is fully stocked at all times before undertaking a trip.
- Compiles a circulation policy for the mobile library.
- Co-ordinates the circulation of material in schools.
- Conducts training, in collaboration with Media Subject Advisors, on handling and using the material disseminated to the schools.
- Ensures the effective implementation of the Mobile Library Service at all times.
- Conducts training on the use of resources.

2.2.3 Media Subject Advisor

- Must familiarise principals and SGBs with the South African context of MoLis and their significance in supporting the curriculum.
- Must assist with the marketing of the MoLis to teachers, principals and SGBs
- Must assist teachers, whose schools participate in Farm Schools Hostel Project, in the selection and evaluation of information resources,
- Must assist in fostering a reading culture, in schools participating in Farm Schools Hostel Project, by training teachers and Hostel staff on strategies to foster a reading culture.
- Must assist schools to take part in International Literacy Days.
- Must encourage learners and teachers to have book reviews, reading record cards and classroom dictionaries.
- Must assist Provincial Office in the development of training programmes for schools participating in the Farm Schools Hostel Project,

2.2.4 Library Assistant

- Assists in ordering and processing of materials for the Centre and MoLi
- Assists with the issuing and receiving back of library stock
- Provides information services to teachers
- Re-shelving of library stock
- Assists teachers, learners in using the resources
- Maintenance of the database of the library stock
- Assists in conducting needs analysis
- Assists with processing stock for the mobile library.
- Assists with loading material before undertaking a trip to schools.
- Ensures that the mobile library is clean at all times.
- Signs out the library resources/material when visiting schools.
- Allocates resources as required by schools and according to the resource co-ordinator’s instructions.
- Identifies teacher and learner needs on utilising relevant resources.
- Ensures continuous communication with the schools.

2.2.5 Mobile Operator

- Ensures that the bus is mechanically sound and fuelled for trips.
- Drives the bus according to the pre-authorised itinerary
- Assists with loading and unloading resources.
- Assists in keeping the mobile library clean.
- Monitors the technical needs of the mobile library.
- Assists with allocation of resources when visiting schools
2.3 School Level

Participating schools must sign a service level agreement. This includes their SGB, SMT and designated DTDC officials.

Guidelines on library material and equipment

- All schools must register to use the DTDC resources before being issued with a registration card.
- Owing to the shortage of available resources at this stage, no resources will be handed out for a loan period of more than 5 days. (This clause will be amended as soon as the centre has sufficient resources).
- All resources returned will be inspected to verify that they are still in their original condition.
- Clients who do not return borrowed material on or before the due date will be suspended from the loan service.
- Cutting, tearing or defacing materials in the library centre is prohibited and defined as vandalism. Clients who commit this offence will be expected to replace the defaced material.
- Clients who want to use library materials will have to fill in a register.
- To address the principle of equity, farm schools and other disadvantaged schools will be visited with books and equipment to empower teachers and learners in those schools.

2.3.1 School Principal(s)

The Principal, as an instructional leader of the school, should ensure that the following are in place to support the MoLis:

- Reading promotion programme,
- Mobile Library integration programme in the school time timetable
2.3.2 Teacher(s)

Act(s) as:

- Liaison between the library assistant and the school,
- Safety and security of the Mobile Library resources taken out on loan by the school.

2.3.3 Hostel staff

Act(s) as:

- Liaison between the library assistant and the hostel school,
- Safety and security of the Mobile Library resources taken out on loan by the school.

Chapter 3: Collection development

3.1 Procurement of the resources

To support the literacy strategy of the Free State Department of Education (FSDOE) the DTDCs implemented the mobile library project whereby under-resourced rural schools are provided with multi-media resources. The mobile library project is a joint project between the FSDOE and the South African Primary Education Support Initiative (SAPESI) a Non-Profit Company which started in 2007. SAPESI donated 10 buses as well as facilitates the donation of books that are placed in the Mobile Library Buses (MoLis). To date approximately 135 000 new and second-hand books have been donated. Ten mobile libraries currently service 324 schools, across all educational districts of the Free State. The mobile libraries visit the recipient schools two to three times per term to loan and collect books. Assistant librarians (10) travel on-board these vehicles, and advise teachers at schools how to select the appropriate books and use them in their lessons. As a result, not only do the children gain an opportunity to interact with a diverse range of books, but teachers are also able to learn how to utilise the materials, and maximise their potential.

3.2 Start-up libraries

Each participating school is serviced by the Mobile Library Bus for a period of two to three years before it is removed from the list of beneficiaries. However, schools that are
removed are not left stranded but receive start-up libraries. Start-Up Libraries are corner libraries comprising of shelves (where a school does not have) and about 500 storybooks. The installation of start-up libraries is done by Biblionef, a Non-Profit Company, which overarching goal is to provide access to good storybooks for children. In 2014 ten schools in Motheo District and in 2016 another five in Lejweleputswa have received the start-up libraries.

Chapter 4: Monitoring and Support

4.1 Provincial Level

The Provincial staff must monitor and support the implementation of the Mobile Bus Library Services Guidelines.

4.2 District Level

4.2.1 Centre Manager

The DTDC Manager should ensure that a programme (Route Plan) outlining the visits by the MoLis to beneficiary schools is made available timeously for the purpose of monitoring and support by the Provincial Office staff.

4.2.2 Resource Coordinator
The Resource Coordinator monitor and support the implementation of the Mobile Bus Library Services on a monthly basis and provide feedback to the beneficiary schools, the Provincial Office and the relevant DTDC officials.

4.2.3 Media Subject Advisor

The Media subject Advisor should monitor and support implementation of the Mobile Bus Library Services on a monthly basis and provide feedback to the beneficiary farm school hostels, the Provincial Office and the relevant DTDC officials.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Reporting structure

- The CES: DTDCs reports directly to the Director: Institutional Development Management and Governance and the sponsors.
- The heads of DTDCs report monthly to the District Directors and the CES: DTDCs.
- The resource co-ordinators report to the head of the DTDC.
- A monitoring tool will be used for reporting so that gathering the information will measure the impact of the mobile libraries.

Revision of policy

This policy will be reviewed annually.
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