Reading Promotion in Zambia
Lessons from Three Projects

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The aim of my thesis is to investigate three different reading projects, which have been set up to promote reading among school children in Zambia. I have used my field study together with some general observations to draw some lessons on the obstacles and challenges present in Zambia in relating literacy to culture among young people.

In identifying these lessons, I have drawn on a theoretical framework which relates literacy to a cultural meaning system, addresses the importance of social interaction, as well as distinguishing between experienced and instrumental reading.

My methods have been observations and semi-structured interviews with organisers, teachers and students involved in the three projects. The interviews have been based on four research questions. These have been used to solicit the opinions about the reading projects, what challenges they have confronted, what the participating children actually read, and the views and attitudes towards reading as reflected within the projects.

In my study I found that two of the projects had adopted an approach in which social interaction was an essential element to promote reading. My study revealed that an instrumental attitude dominated towards reading, partly explained by what books were being supplied. I further concluded that one important obstacle for promoting literacy was related to the use of foreign language as an educational tool, and hence seen as providing a “social ladder”, as compared to the vernacular language.

Key words: reading promotion, reading circles, literacy, reading culture, bookbus library, Lubuto Project, FAWEZA, Zambia.
List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations
AIDS  Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BTL  Breakthrough to Literacy
FAWEZA  Forum for Women Educationalist in Zambia
HIV  Human Immuno-deficiency
RC  Reading circles
SCECSAL  Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Library and Information Associations
SKRIN –project  Project Writing Culture and Use of Media in Nordic Families
Sida  Swedish International Development Agency
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
ZLS  Zambia Library Service
ZLA  Zambia Library Association
ZIBBY  Zambia International Board for Books for Young people
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all I would like to express my gratitude to all teachers and children participating in the three reading projects described in this study. Without you and your willingness to share thoughts, opinions and experiences about the projects, about reading and about life in Zambia generally, I would not have been able to write this thesis.

I also want to extend my sincere appreciation to all of you who are engaged in the promotion of reading and literacy in Zambia, and who so generously shared your time, knowledge and books with me. Let me just mention Benson Njobvu, Evaristo Ngulube, Chris Chirwa, Professor Robert Serpell, Francis Sampa, Dr Lawrence Mukuka, Sevelino Vasco, Jane Kinney Meyers, Eleni Coromvli as well as all the people at FAWEZA.

I would also like to thank my local supervisor, Vincent Snijders at the Royal Dutch Embassy for helping me with contacts and encouragements. I am most grateful to my supervisor Mrs Inga Laloo at the University College in Borås, who even came to visit this wonderful country, and who made sure I was kept on track and guided me through this exercise.

I am also thankful to Sida who through their grant made it possible for me to undertake a Minor Field Study.

Maria Ronnäs
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1. INTRODUCTION

This essay is about reading promotion in Zambia, a landlocked country in Southern Africa, which brings together several cultures and holds a number of languages. It has the size of Sweden and Norway combined and a population of some 11 millions. Zambia is defined by the United Nations as a least developed country, which means that its national income is very low and that extreme poverty is widespread1.

I arrived in Zambia in August 2006 and since then it has been my country of residence. During my stay here, I have come across the issue of literacy on numerous occasions and I have had the privilege of meeting many people who have demonstrated a commitment to the promotion of reading. I have previously, in the 1990’s, lived in Zimbabwe and the regional context was not wholly new to me when I arrived to Zambia. My own personal background has been of help as my living in Zambia has given me a better understanding of this society, compared to what a shorter visit could offer. However, I am also aware that as a European resident, I bring my own history with me as I try to read the Zambian situation.

My own professional background is as a teacher with a focus on Swedish as a second language. I have for a number of years been teaching young people with a background as either first or second generation of immigrants. Through my profession I gained an understanding on how young people are struggling to cope with a language, which was both alien to their own culture, and held the prospects for entry into Swedish society and social advancement. This experience has to some extent guided me as I have tried to understand the difficulties and complexities of language and literacy here in Zambia. My interest has centered on: How can reading in a successful way promote literacy in a multicultural society like Zambia? And what does literacy mean for the overall progress of a poor country like Zambia?

Zambia is a relatively young country, having gained its independence in 1964, and it is still struggling with the building of a nation. The people of Zambia are proud, and rightly so, of living in a peaceful and stable country. The country’s main challenge is to overcome widespread poverty and to create wealth. Literacy, culture and language are elements that define individuals and their sense of belonging to a group or a nation. Literacy and basic education is considered among the most significant and important factors that positively impact on a country’s socio-economic development.

Throughout these almost fifty years of independence, education has been a central part of government policies, reflecting a general belief among people that schools, studies and exams represent the way towards a better life. This belief is manifested in many ways. They include the efforts and sacrifices made by countless parents to collect the necessary kwacha (local currency) to pay for school fees and uniforms, at times surpassing the monthly salary, to allow their children another year at school. You can also see it when traveling in the countryside. Names of villages and small towns are made known through large cement made signposts indicating the nearest primary

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1 Extreme poverty is defined as inability to meet basic minimum food requirement based on a monthly cost of the food basket. UNDP Progress Report 2008. Zambia Development Goals, p. 1.
school. You’ll often find these schools situated in the middle of a village, as a proof that even in remote places there are aspirations and hope for development.

The literacy level in Zambia between 15-24 years old was estimated in 2004 to be 70 % and in disaggregated terms as 75 % for men and 66 % for women.\(^2\) The number of children enrolled into primary education has since then increased, which could possibly indicate that the literacy rate is improving.\(^3\) However, many pupils, especially girls, still drop out from school at an early age. The number of drop outs has however decreased. During 1990 and 2006 there was an increase in 20 % as to the number of girls attending school up until grade seven\(^4\). Despite these improvements, a great number of Zambian students are still leaving school without sufficient knowledge in reading and writing. Hence they lack essential skills as they enter into their professional life and for their ability to participate in a democratic society. This is true for both women and men.

These problems within education have not only to do with scarce resources but with a handful of other characteristics of the school system. These features include old fashioned teaching and an inclination to eject less successful or fortunate students. It also has to do with the clash between the local culture with its own language and the foreign educational language of English, representing something alien but also the prospects of entering a new and better world of living.\(^5\)

Suffice here to note that English is the official language along with seven African languages, recognized as ciBemba, ciNyanja, siTonga, kiKaonde, siLozi, Lunda and siLuvale.\(^6\). Altogether 72 dialects and languages are spoken within the borders of Zambia.

I share the belief that good reading skills and even a love for reading can make a change for the better. I am interested to see what it takes to make this happen in Zambia. Talking to people and asking questions about reading and promoting reading I believe will contribute, albeit in a small way, to a discussion necessary to make that difference.

The question of reading promotion and developing literacy is an essential part of the scientific field of Library and Information Science. You may argue that we as librarians and information mediators have a responsibility and a challenge to promote reading. To be able to do that successfully we need a deeper understanding about reading promotion in different situations. This Master Thesis is based on a field study set in the context of Zambia and looking into different ways to promote reading.

My Master thesis also forms part of a Minor Field Study, MFS, financed through a scholarship from Sida (Swedish Agency for International Development Agency).

\(^3\) Ibid.


1.1 Aim and Research Questions

The overall purpose of my thesis is to explore how literacy relates to your own culture. You may argue that the way you understand words, sentences, concepts and arguments will be dependant on how this material body corresponds to your own life as a social person, placed in a certain cultural setting. Words make sense only when they relate to the real – either physical or abstract – world of yours.

What are then the implications when there is a disconnect between the “reading” world and your own world? In Zambia, this issue has its own particular significance for two reasons. The tradition of reading and literature spans over a relatively short period, and once introduced it came primarily through a foreign language, that is English. Today, Zambia has several official languages, though by all account, English serves as the mode of communications in the official sphere, and as the language which holds the prospect of social advancement.

It is my hope that this thesis will in some way contribute to shed light on the above complexity. To this end, I have chosen as the aim of my Master thesis to investigate how three different reading projects are contributing to the promotion of reading among school children in Zambia. Furthermore, I aim to relate some key issues within these projects, as well as some general observations of the Zambian literacy situation, to a theoretical framework and to see what lessons could be drawn. This theoretical framework will have its focus on literacy within the context of a cultural meaning system.

To this end I have formulated the following research questions:

- What are the opinions about the reading projects among the target groups of children and teachers?
- What challenges related to reading and reading promotion have the participating adults and children confronted?
- What kind of books and materials do the participating children read?
- What views towards reading are reflected among children and adults in the three projects?

1.2 Definitions of Concepts

Literacy: When talking about literacy in this Master thesis I mean the ability to read and write. I will also use the concept of literacy as dependant on the social and cultural context. I see literacy not only as sounding out words and decoding texts but as a means
to be able to use and understand information gained from different practises. I am aware of a broader concept of literacy including for example the oral expression. These different practises are of course connected and influencing each other but I consider it not necessary to include this wider concept within the scope of my study. I have not included other forms of expressions like art, music, dance etc, even though these practises are essential as means to promote literature and literacy in terms of reading and writing.

**Oral Tradition:** Information, knowledge, and literature which are passed on from generation to generation and stored in people’s memories. It is passed on by the word of mouth and consists of several different forms like stories, poems, riddles and proverbs among others.

**Reading Culture:** A reading culture is a culture where reading is guarded as highly valued and appreciated in society. It is a culture where its members read extensively and it is part of their regular habit. Reading is not only regarded as something you practise at school or for studying but it is also something practised at home during leisure as a means of pleasure.

**Child:** Is a person below the age of 18.

### 1.3 Disposition

My thesis is built on a study I have undertaken which relates primarily to three specific projects of reading promotion, located in Lusaka and its surroundings. Through this study I will seek answers to a number of research questions, which I believe may shed light on some broader issues relating to literacy and reading promotion in Zambia. To this end I will make use of a theoretical framework, which has as its focus the question of reading within a cultural meaning system. In my attempt to combine a specific study of limited scope with a more general discussion on reading promotion in Zambia, I have opted to use the following outline for my thesis.

Having presented my aim, I will proceed to describe the general setting for any project which will engage in reading promotion in Zambia. This chapter will take the reader briefly through language situation, addressing the question of oral tradition vis-à-vis literacy, and the role of English. I have also included an historical brief on the educational system, as well as providing some facts about libraries and book publishing in Zambia.

My third chapter deals with previous research on reading promotion and literacy with a focus on Africa. This chapter illuminates the broad number of aspects that can be

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applied to the whole question of reading promotion. Hence, it also serves to illustrate that my particular approach, as outlined in next chapter, is but one among many valid theories which exist in this field.

I then move on in chapter four to present the theories which will provide the main framework for my own analysis. Here I will draw on previous works on cultural dimensions to literacy, on what could be learnt from a transactional approach, and on the distinction between instrumental and experienced reading. I conclude that chapter by bringing these theories together into what I will use as my theoretical framework-

With chapter five I enter into my own field study, explaining my choice methods and how I decided to proceed with interviews and observations. I also give reasons as to the selection of projects and discuss some methodological problems which I came across.

In chapter six I present the three projects, which have been the focus of my field study. These projects are mobile libraries, reading circles and a particular library project which aims to reach street children. In chapter seven, I present the results of my research questions, detailing what results emanated from each of the three projects.

In chapter eight, I analyse the results of my study making use of the theoretical framework. This chapter hence contains an attempt to combine results, which I have gathered through own research, with a frame of theories, drawn from some distinguished scholars.

Finally in chapter nine, I broaden my analysis into a more general discussion on some of the challenges that reading promotion is confronted with in Zambia, and on that basis I draw some conclusions.

2. THE SETTING

This chapter describes the development of some relevant parts of Zambian society, and will thus provide a context deemed necessary for a proper understanding of the setting of any reading promotion activity in Zambia. After a brief description of the political and economic situation, with an emphasis of the devastating effects of the Hiv/Aids pandemic, I will then focus on the language situation. This will include some details on how an oral tradition was gradually complemented by a written culture introduced by the colonial power, together with the English language. The independent Zambia has since grappled with building a relevant educational system, where the language of instruction as been an important issue of debate. I make note of the rather dire situation that pertains to libraries and book publishing in Zambia.

Zambia became independent in 1964 with Dr Kenneth Kaunda as its first President. The country was ruled as a one party state between 1971 and 1991. Then general multiparty elections were held and Frederick Chiluba came into power with his party called Movement for Multiparty Democracy. The previously socialist-oriented economy was gradually replaced with a more market-oriented one. Chiluba was re-elected in 1996,
however his second term was marked by mismanagement and widespread corruption. In the general elections in 2002, the MMD retained power and Levy Mwanawasa was elected as the new President. He won a second term of office in the general elections in 2006. An EU Observation Mission team observed those elections and gave a general approval to the way the elections were conducted. I myself had the privilege of being part of its local team. President Mwanawasa died in August 2008, which led to a Presidential by-election in October. Mr. Rupiah Banda was then elected the new President, having previously held the position as Vice-President.

Zambia is an agrarian society with most people living in the rural areas making a living on subsistence farming. However, the mining sector is an important part of the economy, with copper being the main source of income. The mining industry has led to a fairly urbanized society compared to other African countries. Urban areas are the Copper belt Province and Lusaka Province. You may say that Zambia consists of two different worlds as the rural areas have their way of a more traditional life while a more modern lifestyle is visibly emerging in the urban areas. Many Zambians move quite conveniently between these two worlds and lifestyles.

As from the early 1970, Zambia experienced a long period of economic and social decline. The reasons behind were falling and low copper prices, raising oil prices, coupled with poor economic policies, which together brought down the economic and social wellbeing of a large part of society. The Kaunda period emphasized social protection for all and the obligation for the state to provide such service. However in effect, public administration proved unable to deliver the necessary services.

This decline over several decades of economic standard was compounded by the pandemic Hiv/Aids which severely contributed to a breakdown of society and a lowering of the average expectancy of life. Together with tuberculosis and malaria, this pandemic constitutes a threat to lives of the ordinary Zambians. At present about 16% of the population are Hiv-infected and women are more affected than men. The life expectancy at birth has fallen to about 40 years. The pandemic has led to a large increase of the numbers of orphans in Zambia.

While Hiv/Aids continue to pose a real danger to individuals and to society as a whole, important progress has been made in combating this disease. Anti-retroviral medicine is now readily and freely available, at least in the urban areas. There is no doubt a general awareness about how the infection is spread although misconceptions and superstitious beliefs still prevail. The fight against Hiv/Aids is made difficult through the stigma that generally surrounds the disease. While no longer necessarily a death sentence, the diagnosis of Hiv/Aids is still considered as something shameful and not talked about unless in veiled terms.

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15 The World Bank, 2008 April 24, p. 3.
Zambia belongs to the least developed countries in the world, with an estimated GDP/capita of 1010 USD for 2007.\textsuperscript{17} Two thirds of the population is defined as poor.\textsuperscript{18} About 50\% of the population is considered to live in extreme poverty.\textsuperscript{19} During the past 6-7 years, Zambia has however experienced a turnaround for the better. The privatized mining sector has seen sharply rising prices in copper, bringing profit to the industry (though in the latter part of 2008 mineral prices fell). A prudent macro economic policy and the reduction of huge external debts, together with a more liberalized business friendly environment have all contributed to sustained economic growth during the past years. The number of poor people has been reduced, including the number of very poor. Though life has improved in the urban areas, poverty remains as before in the rural areas.\textsuperscript{20}

Foreign assistance still account for some 20 \% of Government budget though it has declined over the past decade.\textsuperscript{21}

Zambia is a deeply religious country. Christianity is the official religion. Churches play an important role in many people’s lives and strongly influence their values and thinking.

The infrastructure of roads is not well developed which makes it difficult to travel within the country and to reach out to remote parts of the country. Domestic flights are limited to a few destinations. During the rain period from mid-November to mid-March many roads become impassable and in effect make parts of the country largely inaccessible.

\textbf{2.1 Language Situation}

The wonderful thing about language is that it cannot be limited to territorial borders.\textsuperscript{22}

In Zambia many languages and dialects are spoken. Today you find as many as 72 different dialects and languages. Most of these are Bantu languages but the discrepancies are quite large.\textsuperscript{23} You may broadly identify ten different languages within which various dialects are spoken.\textsuperscript{24} No single ethnic or linguistic group in Zambia can claim to constitute an overall majority of the population. The first President to Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, tried to diffuse tensions between various ethnic groups within the country. His motto to unit Zambia: “One Zambia, One Nation” is well known even today.\textsuperscript{25} The only language that was in common for the whole country was, ironically,

\textsuperscript{17} The World Bank 2008, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 6.
\textsuperscript{21} Minister of Finance and National Planning 2009. \textit{Budget Address to Parliament}, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{23} Musambachime 2005, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{25} Musambachime 2005, p. 151.
English, the language of the former colonial masters. So at that time of independence, English became the language of instruction at schools as well as the language in which you learn how to read.

Together with English, seven other large ethnic languages have the status as national languages. These are ciBemba, ciNyanja, siTonga, siLozi, siLuvale, kiKaonda and Lunda. Bemba and Nyanja also play the role as lingua franca in some parts of the country.26 The different languages are spoken within all of Zambia’s nine provinces as a result of the population’s mobility. It is not always easy to distinguish between the different languages, and vocabularies sometimes overlap. While in some areas the language has retained its originality, in other parts languages have merged with one another. Most Zambians speak more than one language.27

2.2 Oral Tradition and Literacy

The art of conversation is regarded very highly and proverbs are the palm oil with which the words are eaten.28

Roman Catholic priests, known as the ‘White Fathers’, arrived in Zambia around 1890. Although their intentions were different compared to the British South Africa Chartered Company, which ran and controlled the territory, they were still part of the colonial enterprise. The ‘White Fathers’ were active in the northern provinces of Zambia. After establishing several mission stations they chose ciBemba as the local language for the literary translation of religious and educational materials.29 Among the earliest written texts are the first ciBemba grammar from 1907 and a translation of the New Testament in 1923. In this part of Africa there were at that time no written forms of African language. A number of Africans had, of course, learned English during the first three decades of colonial rule, both in its written and spoken forms.

Zambian ethnic groups have thus been literate in terms of reading and writing for only about a century. Historically all groups relied on oral histories, including the telling of creation myths, proverbs, and folktales passed down through the generations. This tradition has been joined by the written word, which serves as a complement to the oral histories. Indeed even today villages have storytellers. Unlike other African cultures, where this role as a storyteller sometimes is designated inter generationally, in Zambian villages storytellers are simply men and women who have the ability to tell a good story and captive an audience.30

The domain of oral traditions and expressions encompasses an enormous variety of forms including proverbs, riddles, tales, myths epic songs, prayers, dramatic

26 Musambachime 2005, p. 150.
27 Ibid., p.31.
30 Ibid., p. 43.
performances and so on. They transmit knowledge, values, morale lessons and collective memory and play an essential role in cultural life.\textsuperscript{31}

Virtually all of the ethnic groups in Zambia have their own stories that have to be passed on through the generations. Certain characteristics are associated with various animal species and the strongest are often outwitted by more resourceful underdogs. Those familiar with Zambian tales point out that animal characters have both familiar habits and forms to which the audiences can relate, but they also permit the storyteller and his audience to use a great deal of imagination.

The storytelling village tradition has been supplemented, and in some respect supplanted by other types of media especially radio but also television and Internet. But the Zambian radio has also from time to time accommodated these traditions.\textsuperscript{32}

\textbf{2.3 Role of English}

For the majority of Zambians, English is a second language and for many in the rural areas even a foreign language. It is usually not a language you speak when you grow up. Normally, you get exposed to English when you begin your education. Prior to 1999, the school children were introduced to reading, writing and arithmetic in the medium of English, irrespective of their home language. In addition, one of the seven recognized Zambian languages were taught for only two or three lessons per week.\textsuperscript{33}

However, as early as 1969 the Vice-President of Zambia at that time, Simon Kapwepwe, had this to say:

\ldots we should stop teaching children through English right from the start because it is the surest way of imparting inferiority complex in the children and the society. It is poisonous. It is the surest way of killing African personality and African culture.\textsuperscript{34}

The foreign language English certainly played a unifying role in a multilingual country like Zambia. But English was the language associated with power and prestige. This fact still influences the attitude towards the English language as the universal medium of education in Zambia. The introduction of English at grade 1, when a child is entering education, can however serve to “democratize” the status of the language.\textsuperscript{35} It becomes available to everyone. However, to learn both how to read and to do that in a foreign or second language is very difficult.

Within the Zambian society these issues have been discussed for a long time. English has been kept as a language for instructions at schools for higher grades. As from 1999 a new reading program introduced vernacular languages from grade 1 to grade 3. The

\textsuperscript{31} Agatucci, Cora 2007. African storytelling. \url{http://web.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum2/afrst.htm} 2007-09-10
\textsuperscript{32} Taylor, Scott 2006. p. 43-44.
\textsuperscript{34} Kapwepwe in Serpell 1978, p. 432.
\textsuperscript{35} Serpell 1978, p. 434.
reason behind this new reading program was a recognition of the fact that it is difficult to learn how to read, beginning in a foreign language, something which has led to poor reading levels in Zambian schools.  

It is difficult to learn how to read in English, and not only because English is a second or even a foreign language to most Zambians. English also has a language structure where the sounds of the letters differ between words and the sounds do not correspond with the alphabetic phonemes. It is easier to learn how to read in one of the local languages where there is a correspondence between the sound and the letter. 

The language discussion in Zambia reflects a general issue in Africa about whether reading should be in a second language or in your mother tongue. In many African countries pupils at school are supposed to master the mainstream language which often turns out to be their second language. Millions of pupils in Africa are expected to become literate in a language to which they have little exposure.  

There is a wide range of research demonstrating how important it is to begin with the art of reading using your vernacular language. This however presents problems as there is often nothing suitable for children to read. How do you continue develop your literacy skills if you have nothing to read in your own language? Newspapers and magazines can be one answer, if such are available in vernacular languages. However, this is not the case in Zambia and it would anyhow only partially address the problem. 

2.4 Educational system

The formal education in Zambia is divided into three levels, primary, secondary and upper secondary school. Higher education is very limited and centred to seven universities. You have to pay fees to be able to study at the university, even if sometimes students are helped by scholarships and loans. So-called basic schools provide teaching from year one to nine, as year nine is considered to be a decent level of schooling for the majority of children. However the education is only free up to grade seven and most pupils drop out then. 

Both government and private schools exist in Zambia. The private school system began largely with the Christian missionaries during the late 19th century and early twentieth century. Today half of the population is under 16 years and the need for more places in schools are immense. Classes are from 55 up to sometimes 100 students. 

39 Sampa 2003, p. 176. 
41 Ibid.  
42 Ibid.
also community schools. They appeared out of a need for additional places and relevant education for out-of-school children and youth. The needs of orphans, and to cater for the education of poor girls formed a key reason behind the establishment of such schools. They are intended to be free of charge to children between nine and sixteen.\(^{43}\)

As for 2009, the Government has set aside some 15% of its budget to education. Schools are supposed to be free of charge though in practice parents will find a number of expenses related to their children’s school going, such as paying for school uniforms, materials and a fee for the parent-teacher association. Many Zambian families have difficulties in paying what all this add up to. The cost of going to school does contribute to children leaving school much too early.

The Zambian Government intends to revitalise the educational sector and it has managed to improve access to primary education.\(^{44}\) However the quality of education is still low as measured by tests and examination results. There are large differences in teacher/pupils ratio between and within schools, which has an impact on the learning achievements. Other problems are school management and teacher training as well as lack of books and teaching materials.\(^{45}\) There is also a high absence rate for teachers due to illnesses such as HIV/Aids, tuberculosis and malaria, or because of attendance at funerals or simple lack of motivation.\(^{46}\)

The high enrolment to basic education is followed by high drop out rates, especially from grade 7. You need to achieve good marks to get a scholarship or be able to pay the fees to move onto higher grades. Girls drop out earlier, many quit school already in grade 5 due to different circumstances like early pregnancy, domestic duties at home, lack of encouragement or abuse from teachers or boys.\(^{47}\)

### 2.5 Breakthrough to Literacy Program

A survey from 1999 found that children were reading at a level two grades below what was expected in English and three grade levels below what was expected in Zambian languages. Some of the factors identified as leading to the poor reading levels include inappropriate teaching methods, lack of emphasis on reading in the curriculum and in the teacher training college, and the use of a second language- English- for initial literacy.\(^{48}\)

Already in 1996, the Ministry of Education had recognized the poor literacy situation and concluded that Zambia had embarked on a misguided language policy for initial literacy. A new education policy was put into place with the aim to improve the literacy situation. The Government recommended that initial literacy instruction was to be conducted in a child’s mother tongue. The motive given was that learning processes are

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\(^{45}\) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands April 2008, p. 16.  
\(^{46}\) Informant 1 Embassy of the Netherlands, January 2009.  
\(^{47}\) Ibid.  
\(^{48}\) Informant 2 University of Zambia, January 2009.
the most effective when the language of instruction is familiar to the children and their teacher. The learning builds on the knowledge and competences that the child already possesses, and this facilitates the new knowledge involved with learning the technique to read.\(^49\)

Another important motive for this reform was that children need the opportunity to express themselves in discussions and to be proud of their Zambian traditions and culture. When a native language is used at school, its environment will not look foreign to the children. It was argued that the learning process in both the children’s home language and in English would be greatly facilitated by this approach. There was also an expectation that teaching children to read in their mother tongue would stimulate the emergence of local writers. This latter expectation has however not materialized.\(^50\)

In 1997, the Ministry of Education piloted Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL). This course of action was chosen because it is based on a familiar language policy. The following year, BTL was started at 25 schools. This pilot project was seen as a great success and the Ministry of Education decided that Zambia should continue with the program, using the same methods for teaching initial literacy in the mother tongue. The policy stated that children should begin to read in one of the seven local languages approved by the Ministry of Education. The languages were ciBemba, siLozi, ciTonga, ciNyanja, Lunda, siLuvale or kiKaonde.\(^51\)

The success has been dramatic, according to Francis Sampa, an educationalist working for the Ministry of Education.\(^52\) The reading instruction is separated from language teaching, which also means there is more time for reading during school hours. It enables children to learn from the known to the unknown, and thus both facilitate learning as well as to make it meaningful.

Despite the initial success, the challenges remain. The large number of pupils in each class inhibits proper teaching. While reading instruction is given in one of the seven local languages, the mobility of the population means that many pupils would still have a different mother tongue than the local language of instruction. The language may even be more foreign than English. Sometimes the schools have a shortage of books written in local languages and also an overall shortage of books. Book-boxes might be available but it is not sufficient. School libraries very seldom exist at primary level. All these difficulties add up and underline the general problem of teaching in a local vernacular language.\(^53\)

New literacy tests have recently been done in grade 3 and they show that pupils are still not reading at the expected level. One reason may be the fact that the local language used at school is another language than your mother tongue. In Lusaka the pupils have initially been reading in ciNyanja even though only 40 % of the city’s population has ciNyanja as their mother tongue. The remaining 60 % speak other Zambian languages.

\(^{49}\) Informant 3 Ministry of Education, January 2009.
\(^{50}\) Informant 4 Book Management & Publishing Consultant January 2009.
\(^{51}\) Ibid.
\(^{52}\) Ibid.
\(^{53}\) Ibid.
The differences between the languages are not that large and there might be other more important factors to explain the lower than expected results. Such factors could be related to teacher training, the large number of students in each class and lack of books to practice reading from. One conclusion is that there is a need for linguistic flexibility when it comes to education and teaching.\(^{54}\)

### 2.6 Libraries

Libraries play an important role when it comes to information retrieving and to enhance literacy. Models of public libraries were imported into Africa without consideration of the information needs and the situation of the African people.\(^{55}\)

“The colonial education system inherited by Africa and expanded since independence, presented reading as something to be learned, rather than a means of enjoyment. Books are often associated with study and you read to pass your exams”.\(^{56}\)

Reading has been seen as a rather solitude activity and contrary to traditional values. Parents do not always give encouragement or home support when it comes to reading. Homes are often overcrowded, noisy and after sunset too dark for the printed word to be read. Many within the educated elite are non-readers, “content only to use the printed word to pass exams”.\(^{57}\)

The origins of libraries in Zambia can be traced back to the colonial period. Early library services mainly catered for the minority of settlers and expatriate white community. They lived mainly along the railway line from Livingstone in the south to the Copper belt in the north. Over time different types of libraries developed including: public libraries, school libraries, academic and special libraries. At the time of independence in 1964, the Zambian nation inherited a legacy of public library service which was only serving an urban minority.\(^{58}\)

Adolph Amadi, active in the area Library and Information Science at the Cambrian College of Applied Arts in Sudbury, Canada, argues that libraries in Africa need to be adopted by the communities and by the society, which they intend to serve. Greater attention needs to be paid to information packaging and presentation in order to achieve full effectiveness and be attractive to African library users.\(^{59}\) Africa has a traditional system of sharing both learning and information. This system is built on a person to person pedagogy and is based on indigenous African values, which need to be taken into consideration when establishing libraries in African countries.\(^{60}\)

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\(^{54}\) Informant 2 January 2009.


\(^{57}\) Ibid., p.135.

\(^{58}\) Zambia Library Service country report 2004-06. [www.scecsal.org](http://www.scecsal.org)

\(^{59}\) Amadi, Adolphe 1981. *African libraries*, p. 120.

\(^{60}\) Ibid., p. 120.
Some of the major factors that have hindered the development of library services in Zambia have been poor funding and lack of appropriate legislation for libraries. At the moment there is no designated national library institution. Instead the role of a national library service is being performed by four main institutions such as Zambia Library Service, which provides library services on a national scale and the University of Zambia Library, which plays the role of National Reference Library. The other two institutions are the National Archives of Zambia which is mandated as the legal depositary of printed publications and the Information Services Unit of the National Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research, which serves as the National Library for Science and Technology literature. It is only the National Archives of Zambia that has legal basis under the Printed Publication Act of 1969. Zambia Library Association is the only one organization that coordinates and looks into the affairs of librarians and information scientists in Zambia.

The problems with the library services in Zambia are poor access to information, poor resource mobilization, lack of value and appreciation of information at all levels in society and poor regional and international cooperation. Access to libraries is limited and uneven. These services are restricted to urban areas. Library collections in most libraries are far below standards, primarily due to high costs and low funding. The lack of appreciation may be explained by the teacher-centered curriculum existing in schools, where pupils regard the teacher as the only source of information.

There are different kinds of public libraries. Most are run by Zambia Library Service and some libraries are administered by the local authorities. There are also a few libraries run by foreign missions and other organizations like The British Council.

School libraries are organized and run by individual schools. In general library services are better organized in privately run schools than in government schools. The Zambia Library Service supports school libraries through facilitating their establishment, and by providing advice, training and book donations. The ZLS is now trying to establish more school libraries and also to educate library assistants to run the libraries in schools.

It is also worth mentioning that a Zambian branch of the International Boards of Books for Young People, IBBY, was recently established. It is still too early to say what influence this branch may have on the provision of child literature in libraries and elsewhere.

2.7 Book Publishing and Book Market

The history of publishing and bookselling in Zambia has gone through different phases. The arrival of missionaries in the late 19th century contributed greatly to setting up

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63 Ibid.
64 Informant 6  Zambia Library Service February 2008.
schools as well as to the introduction of books. The purpose of providing lessons in reading and writing was to spread the gospel. Perhaps as important to the development was the set up of an African Literature Committee, originally in 1937, and later transformed into a Bureau which became part of the Ministry of Education in Northern Rhodesia. Its main objective was to encourage the local publication of works by indigenous writers in local languages. It relied heavily for assistance on publishing companies like Macmillan, Oxford University Press, Collins and many others. Since 1964 when Zambia became independent, the conditions for publishing books have been dependant on the different political systems in place; first a multiparty system from 1964 to 1973, then a one party state from 1973 to 1990 and finally back to a multiparty society after 1991. The political climate during these periods had an impact on how the educational and book publishing policies were developing.

At 1966 the government mandated one publishing company, Kenneth Kaunda Foundation to produce all primary schools textbooks for the whole of Zambia. One textbook for each grade and subject was introduced and the supply for textbooks was centralized. Books for secondary schools and tertiary education continued to be imported. This monopoly, of course, prevented other publishing companies and their role on the Zambian book market was curtailed.

However, during the first ten years of independence the country witnessed a phase of creative writing and the publishing houses responded positively by publishing both established and aspiring writers. The period of a one party system was characterized by a decline in publishing.

In late 1991 an important policy change resulted in a liberalization of textbook production. It has since then been possible to use educational materials from different sources. A number of new indigenous publishing companies emerged but they often lacked the capital and expertise to be competitive and to meet the demand for textbooks. The return of big publishing houses like MacMillan and Oxford University Press among others took place. This was the beginning of a cooperation between the public and private sector in the book sector of Zambia.

Today there are various stakeholders in the book sector as well as a number of booksellers and bookshops. However many challenges remain. There is a poor reading culture among Zambians who are the potential book buyers. There is a lack of paper mills and availability of local pulp as well as lack of printing and production materials. It is in fact cheaper to import than to produce books locally. Libraries are poorly stocked and the library facilities around Zambia are inadequate. It is difficult to get loans and there is lack of marketing skills within this sector. A new National Book Policy is soon to be written and hopefully it will pave the way for necessary reforms to facilitate the book production in Zambia.

According to Edigo Mpanga, the educational and literacy activities create a demand for publications but the lack of such a reading culture is often invoked as an excuse by

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68 Informant 4 January 2009.
many African publishers who remain unwilling to publish general books. Instead they continue to rely on textbooks.\(^{69}\)

The multiplicity of languages means that the potential readers in local languages are split into small groups, making publishers hesitant to risk publishing with little demand although there are people who would like to read in their own local language.\(^{70}\) As an author you have to make a difficult choice as to what language to use. While you may wish to write in a vernacular language, you would also have to consider the necessity of reaching a large audience, prompting the use of English.

### 3. PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

Research on literacy and on reading promotion is rich and plentiful. As a background to my thesis I have studied a number of texts covering literacy, libraries and promotion of reading and in particular how these issues are related to an African context. In this chapter I will present an overview of different research and literature connected to my questions and area of interest.

#### 3.1 Reading Promotion

Margaret Makenzi, senior librarian at Egerton University in Kenya, argues that reading and literacy is the key to national development and individual improvement, and that it is one of the most rewarding pursuits of life.\(^{71}\) However, due to the high levels of illiteracy in the developing world, many children do not get a positive start on reading unlike children in the developed world. Books are expensive and rare and only bought if they are really considered necessary.

A majority of the literate parents either have no time to read with their children, or simply lack the interest and culture of reading.\(^{72}\) There is little understanding that the door to the world may be open to those who read. Poor reading habits should not only be blamed on poverty according to Makenzi, but may be traced to lack of enthusiasm, interest and the love for books. She argues in favor of enhancing a reading culture in early childhood as children are more free and willing to learn at an early age. Children should be encouraged to read for leisure. It will help them to reach new levels of more difficult reading material and develop their reading skills.\(^{73}\)

What factors would then make a difference to reading and to literacy? Warvick B Elley, University at Canterbury, is one among several who argues that the attitudes of society at large towards reading, and the prevailing literacy tradition are two such important

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\(^{69}\) Mpanga 2003, p. 71.


\(^{71}\) Makenzi, Margaret 2004. Reaching out to the less advantaged, p. 1-9.

\(^{72}\) Ibid.

factors. He makes reference to the Nordic countries, which for more than a century have had impressive levels of reading competence as well as literacy, with no shortages of libraries, bookshops, and newspapers as well as having well-educated models to support the reading habit in the next generation. Access to public libraries and to bookstores is another important factor that enables people to get hold of books to read.

Reading educators usually focus on methods of reading and forget the need to promote positive attitudes among their students towards reading. The reason may be that attitudes remain a concept hard to understand.

There is also a close link between attitudes and expectations, one is the expectation of success versus failure when it comes to reading and the other is the expectation of pleasure versus boredom. This can result in a system of feelings that can cause a learner to approach or avoid a reading situation. A motivation for reading is crucial in order to create a world of engaged readers.

What stands out as another important factor is the availability of reading material, at home, school and in the community. It is very difficult to inspire involvement, interest and confidence in reading without relevant reading material being available. Access to reading materials is a key factor in raising literacy levels.

Literacy is a difficult concept to define. Besides the ability to read and write, literacy is at times considered to be the solution to a better world and a means for people to get access to more power. Some claim it brings enlightening, as if people without literacy were not already thoughtful and intelligent. Others argue that literacy brings empowerment. According to Brian Street, professor in language in education, Kings College, London, it is not that simple. He claims that reading does not lead to empowerment unless you are able to transform your knowledge into power in that social context. Symbolic capital is essential to turn literacy into value. In the developed world, power that comes with literacy is the empowerment of self development according to Street.

There exist different literacy practices and a relatively new concept is the reading in a digital world. Although not so common in the developing world today it might be in

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77 Ibid.
81 Street, Brian 2001. Literacy empowerment in developing societies. In Verhoeven & Snow, ed. Literacy and Motivation, p. 293-296.
82 Street 2001, p. 294.
the future. The medium of electronic texts might in more natural, playful and less serious ways contribute to promote reading and literacy in a broader sense.\textsuperscript{83}

\section*{3.2 Reading and Literacy in African Countries}

Literacy campaigns and projects in the developing world have been many and plentiful although not always successful. Ivor Baatjes, Director for Centre for Adult Education in South Africa, has done research on programmes and campaigns taking place since 1994 in South Africa. He found that they all had good intentions but not always achieved the expected outcome. He concludes that while a lot of statistics is available about school enrolment, these figures only provide us with an indication of reading initiatives implemented in formal educational settings.

The statistics tell us very little about how often South African children read and how good they are at reading. Baatjes is asking for standards that define reading competence. He argues that while legislation and policies are in place to enable reading and literacy there is a failure in mobilizing resources and political will.

Baatjes describes a reading society as a culture where every individual can read and where books are a part of daily life. The responsibility for creating lifetime readers lies on a broad group of stakeholders such as families, government, schools, libraries, publishers and bookstores, non-governmental organisations and the mass media.\textsuperscript{84}

Professor Myrna Machet and lecturer Nicoline Wessels, both from the Department of Information Science, at University of South Africa, argue that libraries need to change their image to bring about sustained community outreach projects. They claim that black South Africans have a rich oral culture and that reading have little relevance to their lives. They have been studying a project in South Africa where illiterate parents were trained to read story books effectively to pre-school children in order to help children develop necessary literacy skills.

Machet and Wessels spent 15 months studying one part of the project mentioned above which took place in public libraries in Soweto and Alexandra. In an oral society, reading is often regarded as related to education only and as a result literacy is strongly connected to teachers and schools. Parents want their children to become literate but are not aware of their own importance in building literacy in the young children. There is also a reluctance to build on literacy in indigenous languages as parents and librarians see fluency in English as more important. Machet and Wessels also claim that libraries in South Africa are mainly used as study halls and for study purposes.

It goes without saying that parents who are not readers themselves have little or no knowledge of suitable book-titles. The ability to read does not always translate into a


reading habit. Machet and Wessels argue that intervention programmes are necessary to help children develop a reading habit and to teach adults in their vicinity on how to encourage and support them. Story-reading by family members is similar to the story-telling traditions of many South African cultures but the interaction while reading is not a standard feature. Based on their study of the family literacy program, Machet and Wessel concluded that it takes time to make fundamental changes. The environment in which literacy is carried out is complex and there are no quick fix solutions to change cultural practises and norms.

Machet and Wessels argue that public librarians need training in children’s literature and literacy. They note that in South Africa the training of librarians focuses on information technology and knowledge management. However, public libraries need to ask themselves what role they have if there is no reading public around.85

Sandra Land at the University of Pietermaritzburg has studied different projects in the KwaZulu Natal province of South Africa. She mentions infrastructure within a project as important for success and suggests that clear support for teachers and educators is an essential component for programs to succeed. She also emphasises the importance to having dedicated people involved in order to make the projects work.86

Librarian and leader of the Research department at the School of Librarianship in Denmark, Leif Kajberg stresses the role of libraries to promote literacy and argues that the way forward is to produce local reading materials that build on oral tradition and local knowledge. He also mentions the importance of using visual methods like puppet-shows, videos and drama as useful tools.87

The role of oral traditions and vernacular languages are factors that Alfred Kagan, professor in library administration, University of Connecticut, mentions as important. He refers to the Tanzanian experience of using kiSwahili as a means of instruction in education. Then English is taught as a foreign language.88 In order to use kiSwahili successfully the language was developed and new words were added according to Kagan.

Nations that continue to educate its people in the former colonial language show that they are still influenced by that colonial heritage. Kagan argues that the use of vernacular languages promote pride in cultural tradition, lower dropouts from school and creates an interest in learning.

H.M. Kibirige, Lecturer at East African School of Librarianship, Makerere University, argues that libraries in the developing world tend to be places for the elite. This stands in contrast to UNESCO’s public library manifesto which sets the goal for public libraries as “places operated by people for the people open for free use on equal terms to all members of society”.

85 Machet, Myrna & Wessels, Nicole 2006. Family literacy projects and the public library, p. 54-73.
Kibirige furthermore argues that to develop literacy, libraries need to become educational institutions for the majority and provide opportunities for reading. He emphasises that librarians ought to work where they are most needed.

Literacy is socially constructed and as such embedded in local behaviours or practices, according to Rebecca Knuth at the Department of Information and Computer Science at University of Hawaii, USA. This fact calls for a supportive relationship between orality and literacy.

Knuth discusses how basic reading materials can be developed that support cultural practices and help students to construct literacy out of local knowledge. Promoting reading and literacy is traditionally seen as a task of mastering a set of de-contextualized skills. On the contrary, argues Knuth, and proposes that literacy acquisition is complex and tied to meaning. A successful reader must acquire cultural knowledge about written text. The practice of reading must be done in connection with enjoyable, interesting reading materials. Successful materials must be relevant to the reader. If a student with little exposure to texts is put to read in a non-indigenous language, reading becomes an experience in learning nonsense symbols. Ideally literacy instructions should occur in an integrated setting where it is considered as a communication that involves the four functions of language: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The strength of oral cultures like speaking and listening can provide a context for reading and writing. Knuth states that:

A basic vernacular literature reflecting a mix of the community’s oral style and print conventions can be created through the transcription of local tales, proverbs, oral history, myths and tales…in Africa it may involve additional elements such as family histories, family totems, family praise poems and African dishes.

Another useful method according to Knuth is recording people’s thoughts, stories and experiences and doing so within their own linguistic and cultural practices. Such indigenous materials make reading a meaningful activity with oral based materials serving as a medium of transition. It also makes the oral traditions honoured, rather than abandoned. This development of reading materials may serve as a bridge between literacy and oral traditions.

Different literacy practices exist and it is a wide concept according to an Ugandan example of “Children Reading Tents”. Anna Jönsson and Josefin Olsson have conducted a field study researching reading culture and literacy in Uganda. They conclude that a reading culture must be voluntary and that an education system where you mainly read for exams is an obstacle for a reading culture. Other such obstacles in Uganda are poverty and lack of libraries. On the other hand a reading culture in Uganda is seen as a necessity for development and economic growth. Jönsson

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and Olsson state that reading culture is a complex concept and try to show how different discourses intersect with each other.\textsuperscript{94}

A reading culture is a culture where reading is highly appreciated and it is a habit shared by the members in that society. The ability to read and write alone cannot construct a reading culture. It is essential that reading plays a significant role in people's everyday life. Books and libraries are often seen as redundant in societies that are mainly based on oral traditions and practices. In such societies many people stop reading once formal education is completed.\textsuperscript{95}

Reading is often looked upon as a rather private and not very social activity. A way forward according to Lisa Krolak, at UNESCO Institute for Education, is to develop reading materials that is based on local knowledge. Such material facilitates the transition from oral culture to a literate and culturally enhanced environment. If people do not associate their spoken home language with books and reading, they will most likely see the very act of reading as a foreign activity.\textsuperscript{96}

4. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter I will present three theoretical perspectives on literacy and reading promotion. Given my overall purpose to explore how reading promotion relates to the cultural context, I found Professor Robert Serpell's work of great interest. He addresses the question of a cultural meaning system as an integral part of mastering the art of reading, an issue of particular relevance to a country like Zambia with a colonial history. It may be noted that some of Serpell's empirical studies were done in Zambia. I have also chosen to draw on Professor Ludo Verhoeven's studies and theories which focus on various forms of social interaction as an important educational means of acquiring literacy. This transactional approach actually provides a response to Serpell's findings and in that sense fits into a theoretical framework. Thirdly, I will refer to Lecturer Sten Furhammar's pertinent question on why we are reading. I will make use of his distinction between instrumental and experienced reading as I believe it to be helpful in a discussion on reading promotion, which has its focus on the cultural dimension.

4.1 Transactional Approach

The works presented by Professor Ludo Verhoeven, Professor at Radboud University in the Netherlands, are helpful in terms of identifying the means of promoting literacy engagement and of preventing reading difficulties. Verhoeven relates to the theories by Lev Vygotsky and to studies undertaken by W.H Teale as well as by Catherine E Snow, Harvard University and W. Barnes. He also draws on the results of his own studies.

\textsuperscript{94} Jönsson, Anna & Olsson, Josefin 2008. Reading culture and literacy in Uganda: The case of the Children's Reading tent, p. 79-81.
\textsuperscript{96} Krolak, Lisa 2005. p. 3.
Verhoeven emphasizes a transactional approach and argues that enhanced literacy development will come through learning combined with social interaction. An individual will acquire skills and knowledge by participating in activities with more experienced members of the same culture. The development of literacy takes place at a social level within a historical context. Language can be defined as a sign system for symbolic activities. It is through mastering a language that you acquire a means of socializing your thoughts.

Given this theoretical approach, Verhoeven refers to the work of Teale and provides some factors as instrumental for an early literacy development. These are primarily related to the child’s home and include range of printed materials, access to writing materials, frequency of shared reading and how responsive parents are. Similar Snow and Barnes have found that values attached to literacy and how it is being demonstrated by parents, will have an influence on the child’s literacy skills. The literacy environment of the home, particularly the mother’s education and expectations of the child, is a powerful determinant of the child’s literacy development.

With respect to schooling, Verhoeven argues that a supportive environment will enhance a positive literacy experience. The traditional way of teaching, which viewed the child as someone to take on grammar and lexicon knowledge and someone to provide correct responses, failed to take into account the dynamics of social transaction. Hence there is a need for a shift in the perspectives of language pedagogy with an increased emphasis on the ability to apply new knowledge. Risk taking on the part of the child is thus nowadays viewed as an important part of learning.

Early literacy development will stimulate the child’s motivation to learn. And vice versa, teaching which builds on the child’s motivation by focusing on meaningful activities will stimulate critical thinking and creative expression in writing. In this context, Verhoeven discusses “scaffolding” as a means of bringing about literacy development. This is a conversational strategy where the teacher and the child build on each other’s statement.

Verhoeven relates to a study of his own, undertaken at a Kindergarten in the Netherlands. In the group of children being observed, each child was given the initiative to start a topic and then helped to express ideas through repetitions, expansions and responses to questions as well as receiving confirmations of his or her assertions. The results were then compared to a control group where children took part in a traditional Kindergarten program. The study demonstrated that with a transactional approach, as described, there was a positive effect on narrative skills. Positive effects could also be

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99 Ibid.
shown on phonological awareness skills, like syllabic and phonemic synthesis and reading conventions.\textsuperscript{101}

Verhoeven also refers to another study, where early literacy intervention through individual tutoring proved effective particularly in disadvantaged urban schools. The program provided the opportunity for ongoing conversations with a specially trained teacher while the child was engaged in authentic reading and writing tasks. Children engaged in these activities improved their skills in word decoding, text reading and in letter recognition.\textsuperscript{102}

Verhoeven concludes that a responsive pattern of social interaction helps children overcome the transition from the use of oral language in real contexts to the use of decontextualised content in written texts. Social interaction as an integral part of learning is thus a key to a child’s literacy development. To engage a child in authentic reading and writing tasks combined with the opportunity for ongoing conversation has proved to be an effective device in early language and literacy instruction. Hence, the social context of language should be emphasized in teacher training programs.\textsuperscript{103}

### 4.2 Cultural Dimensions to Literacy

What I found of particular interest and relevance to my study were the works of Robert Serpell, Professor in psychology at University of Lusaka, who argues that literacy goes beyond the ability to read and write at any designed level of proficiency. It is more to literacy than just reading and writing. It is also about acquiring a membership in a community of practices and a sense of ownership of the cultural meaning system that informs the literate activities in a community.\textsuperscript{104} With the rapid changing technology, it has become increasingly necessary to refer to the different forms of literacy.\textsuperscript{105}

Robert Serpell keeps his focus on the cultural dimensions of literacy promotion and schooling. He argues that literacy can only be understood in a cultural context. He elaborates a theory in which it is argued that the process of becoming literate includes two complementary facets. The first being that to become literate involves acquiring membership in a community of practice. The second facet speaks about acquiring a sense of ownership of the cultural meaning system that informs the literate activities of that community.\textsuperscript{106}

Serpell argues that becoming literate is closely associated with practices of your community. Literacy takes on a meaning when it is socialised, you become literate as

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., p. 127-133.
\textsuperscript{102} Verhoeven 2001. Prevention of Reading Difficulties. In Verhoeven & Snow. \textit{Literacy and Motivation}, p. 125
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p. 244-246.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., p. 244-246.
you act within your community. The obvious example given is when children in Western middle class society participate in joint storybook, reading is built into their pattern of everyday life. Your sense of belonging to a community is closely linked to your sense of mastering literacy.\textsuperscript{107}

The second facet relates to understanding the cultural meaning system that underpins the literate activities of that community. You may be able to read the script, the law or the religious texts but it is only when you subjectively take it on – or appropriates it – that you will acquire a sense of ownership over that cultural meaning system.

Serpell illustrates his theory with the electronic mail. To be able to read and understand the instructions on how to use a computer provides you with only one part of being e-mail literate. The electronic mail also offers a community of practice, you will be part of that community, and you’ll acquire ownership of that cultural meaning system as you engage with other users over the internet.\textsuperscript{108}

Serpell goes on to say that within each culture there are various subcultures, within which a certain literary practice develops. These layers of social constellations will intimately influence a child’s literacy development. Whether you will master a certain curriculum will hence also reflect your socio-cultural competence.

This theory of Serpell is partly based on observations he made in Zambia through various studies, notably in the 1970’s. He notes that Western culture, through missionary evangelization; commercial marketing and military conquest, over the past centuries have imposed a hegemonic Western model of education in large parts of the world. He refers to other studies which contend that this hegemony has given the educated elite in Western society an accumulated “cultural capital”, through which their ideas have gained greater social legitimacy than they deserve.\textsuperscript{109}

Another important observation of Serpell is that the formal education in Zambia corresponds to a community of practice alien to the ordinary citizen in that country. Education was provided within a cultural meaning system different from the ones that Zambian boys and girls originally owned. As a result, formal education became a metaphor for climbing a stair case; it not only provided knowledge but opened the way to acquire membership in a new community of practice, which were more destined to bring success in your life.

In these communities, a child who succeeded in her formal education would also hold the prospect of obtaining a formal sector job, of entering another part – a better part – of society. The definition of success thus became extractive, education brought you out of the old community of practice and allowed you to acquire a new sense of ownership. Education was tantamount to social advancement – or rather social mobility. And the opposite was also held true, those who dropped out of school or graduated with low

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
grades, and remained within their original community, were seen as having failed. There emerged a stigma of incompleteness which not only disqualified the person from economically better jobs but also left a strong sense of personal inadequacy.\footnote{Serpell 2001. Cultural dimensions to literacy. In Verhoeven & Snow, ed. \textit{Literacy and Motivation}, p. 257-260.}

Serpell found in his studies that young men and especially women who withdrew from schooling without completing the basis curriculum attributed their “failure” to their own lack of intelligence. Education did not only offer new tools of understanding but required that you could take on a new cultural meaning system. When that failed, Serpell talks about the disempowering outcome of education – you are full of contempt about your original community of practice and have failed to enter into a new one.\footnote{Ibid.}

Education is thus not only a matter of empowerment but could also contribute to erode your ownership of your home community.

Serpell illustrates his thesis with the use of English in education, the language of the former colonial power but scarcely spoken in the homes of the pupils. Soon after Zambia’s independence in 1964, the government decided to introduce a nationwide policy of English as the medium of instruction in public school, starting in the first grade. The rationale being of course that English served significant functions within the administration, international commerce, technical research and tertiary level formal education.

Hence, English became not only the medium to communicate with; it also required the students to grasp a new system of cultural meaning and in becoming part of a new community of practice. Education was not only about knowledge, it underscored the extractive definition of success, of moving out of your home community into another one, which held the prospect of success.\footnote{Verhoeven 2001, p. 257-260.}

\section*{4.3 Experienced versus Instrumental Reading}

Reading in Africa is often synonymous to studying and to schoolwork and it is perceived as an academic obligation.\footnote{Wettmark, Lennart 2002. \textit{To set the ball rolling: Library project for young learners}, (LPYL)} Sten Furhammar, lecturer at the University College of Borås, presents in his book “Varför läser vi”(Why are we reading), different ways to look upon reading and experiencing reading. This discussion is based on results and experiences from a Nordic project, the SKRIN project, where reading habits were examined and investigated. He distinguishes between four categories into which you may identify ways of reading. Two of these categories appear relevant to my study. The two dimensions are \textit{experienced versus instrumental reading}.

The distinction between these two can be explained as the difference between reading for pleasure and experience, and reading for gaining knowledge and understanding. These two dimensions are common, when you discuss what functions reading can

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{2} Ibid.
\bibitem{3} Verhoeven 2001, p. 257-260.
\bibitem{4} Wettmark, Lennart 2002. \textit{To set the ball rolling: Library project for young learners}, (LPYL)
\end{thebibliography}
have. Instrumental reading is often connected to the reading of nonfiction literature but that must, by no means, not always be the case, it may also be about fictional reading, with the purpose to gain knowledge from what you read. Furhammar argues that instrumental reading has a goal and a purpose outside the specific situation of reading while experienced reading has no goal outside the reading situation.

### 4.4 A Theoretical Framework

I will primarily make use of these three scholar’s findings in constructing my own theoretical framework. I do so as I believe that they together contribute in presenting a comprehensive approach to reading promotion, in which the cultural dimension plays an important part.

I will argue that Professor Verhoeven and Professor Serpell bring two different and complimentary perspectives to address the very same issue. That issue, which comprise the core of my thesis, deals with the question on how young people can acquire reading skills within a social and cultural context which is perceived as meaningful. Verhoeven demonstrates that reading is facilitated when you build on social interaction. An individual will strive to master a language as it provides the very tool for socializing with other, and so the promotion of reading should make use of that inherent drive.

While Verhoeven takes an educational approach, Serpell addresses the cultural dimension as a complexity in acquiring literacy. Unless reading makes sense culturally, it will be difficult, if not meaningless, to bring that skill on board and let it become part of your life. Mastering the art of reading will necessarily entail that transaction from being able to pronounce letters and words into understanding what they mean to you. One may say that Serpell poses a fundamental question to which Verhoeven offers a transactional approach.

I believe that Furhammar’s distinction between instrumental and experienced reading provides an added and interesting element to this theoretical framework. I will argue that a transactional approach may have more relevance to one set of reading than to the other. Depending on the kind of reading that young people engage in, there is in my view an issue on how to overcome various kinds of cultural barriers.

My theoretical framework is hence built on these three perspectives on reading promotion, as I believe that they are of particular relevance to multicultural and multilingual situation as the one you’ll find in Zambia. As I have shown in Chapter 3, a number of scholars identify and discuss the importance of a supporting environment and of cultural relevance to reading promotion. I would hence argue that my theoretical framework based on the findings of Serpell, Verhoeven and Furhammar, commands the support from a broader scope of research undertaken by a range of scholars.

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116 Ibid., p. 157.
In applying this theoretical framework to my observations and findings, I hope to be able to illustrate some of the challenges confronted by the three projects in their endeavors to promote reading.

5. METHODS

In my study I will be investigating people’s opinions and views about three reading promotion projects as well as the character of these projects. That is, to study how people understand such phenomena within a social reality. To be able to answer my questions, I am conducting a field study consisting of a number of interviews and observations relating to the projects.

At an initial stage, I was exploring several options to go ahead with this study. Based on my general experience of living in Zambia, and in making preliminary contacts, I came to realise some of the difficulties in undertaking such a field study. For example, there was little written documentation to make use of, neither could I rely on the “institutional memory” of these projects, as little could be found to this effect. I also considered to design a questionnaire or a survey but soon discovered that external circumstances presented major obstacles to such an approach.

This led me to rely on a qualitative method as described by Karin Widerberg,117 as I found this to be the most appropriate one for the kind of issues that I have set out to study. A qualitative study focuses on understanding the social realities based on how participants are interpreting the special context in which they are present.118 This method makes it possible to investigate how pupils, teachers and other persons experience and interpret the projects in which they are engaged.119

As my main method I have chosen semi structured interviews with some of the teachers, pupils and representatives involved with the three reading projects. The simple reason being that if you want to know people’s views on different issues, it is necessary to ask the people involved.120 I will also make use of previous research. As mentioned, one important aim is to relate the observations that will emanate from my field study with an existing theoretical framework. In conclusion I will draw lessons and make concluding remarks based on the pairing of my field study with the theoretical framework.

5.1 Interviews

In my field study I have contacted and visited a number of organisations involved with reading and reading promotion. I have interviewed people managing the projects, as well as teachers and pupils involved with the reading promotion projects.

120 Widerberg 2002, p. 17.
I have made interviews with people at FAWEZA, Forum for African Women Educationalist in Zambia, which runs two of the projects, and with the librarian at the Lubuto library, as well as with the teachers at each school who in one way or another were involved with the projects. I have also conducted interviews with pupils. My interviews with the adults were carried out with each individual separately while the interviews with the children were done in pairs or in groups. I have recorded the interviews and transcribed them, as well as written brief summaries in order to facilitate the analysis. All interviews were performed in English. The selection of pupil informants was done on the basis of what Alan Bryman calls a snowball selection.121

It has been important to establish a relationship with the respondent. When it comes to interviewing children, it is crucial that the interviewer consider the circumstances of the child. The reason being that as an adult you are an authority and in a superior position to the child. It is hence important that the character of the interview be one of a conversation, not like an interrogation.122 I also found that to interview children in pairs or in small groups were preferable, perhaps in particular in a country like Zambia where children may easily feel vulnerable when exposed alone to adults with whom they have no previous relationship with.

When interviewing children in groups it is however important to be aware of the fact that the children will probably influence each other. Still, I considered this to be the best method available to be used.

I found it important to thoroughly explain my questions to the children interviewed. The reason being that for many of these children, concepts and abstracts used in English, were not at first properly understood. If the aim with the interviews and the questions asked is clear then the children might get the chance to develop their own thoughts about the subject.123

Interviewing children demands a great sensibility from the interviewer. Children often tend to seek the “right answer” to the questions asked.124 To interview a child also raises questions of ethics and it is always important to ask parents or other adults for permission. It was not possible for me to ask the parents due to lack of mail or telephones, though instead I received permission from the teachers and headmasters and also from the pupils themselves. Some of the children did not want to participate and that was of course respected. They were always interviewed in pairs or in a group and thus they were never exposed to me on their own. The interviews took from 20 minutes up to 45 minutes for the pupils and around 40 minutes up to 90 minutes for the adults.

I have used semi structured interviews, on the basis of methods described by Alan Bryman.125 I have used an interview guide when asking my questions. It may be noted that a semi-structured interview is a one sided conversation in which the respondent is

123 Ibid., p. 41.
124 Ibid., p. 44.
125 Bryman 2001, p. 301.
allowed free rein as long as the interviewer considers that what is being said is or might be relevant.\textsuperscript{126}

In presenting the results of my field study, I have chosen to conceal the identity by name the sources of information. The reason is that it did not always prove possible to revert to my sources for their approval on how I decided to cite or otherwise make use of what they shared with me in terms of information and opinions. While I was keen to explain my questions to the children I interviewed, I cannot be sure that they fully understood how I would use my interviews, nor was I able to obtain the permission of their parents. I have hence decided to refer to my sources either as informants (teachers and children at the projects) or by only identifying which position they held.

\section*{5.2 Observations}

In doing my empirical research I used observations as my second method to investigate all the three different projects. My observations can be characterised as open and involving short time participation as described by Alan Bryman.\textsuperscript{127} Karin Widerberg has argued it may be fruitful to combine different methods,\textsuperscript{128} which in my case have involved a combination of observations and interviews. Being in a different context compared to Sweden, I found it essential to observe the projects in order to better understand what would come out of the interviews and about what the informants were not telling me as well. I believe it is a good way of getting to know the Zambian school and library context a bit better. I also found it to be good and fruitful to make these observations as part of my assessment on how the projects are able to achieve their goals.

Though the preference, as outlined by Widerberg, for a proper sequence beginning with observations, then followed by interviews,\textsuperscript{129} was in my case not always possible due to various circumstances. The lengths of the observations were different. As for the mobile library, I went out together with the mobile library and I observed what was happening at the schools we were visiting. It took about two to three hours. I observed three reading circles at different schools and days. It took from half an hour to one hour.

At the Lubuto library project I observed different events going on, at different times, and it took from 20 minutes up to one and a half hour. When I observed events or day to day activities it was important to be aware of the fact that people may behave or act differently just because I was observing them. They might be trying to give me a more positive image of the situation.

I had to make prior appointments with the mobile libraries to be able to observe them when they visited the schools with their book van. Every time it appeared as they had arranged a tour particularly for me, although the schools were happy for the visit as

\textsuperscript{126} Markless, Sharon & Streatfield, David 2006. \textit{Evaluation the Impact of your Library}, p. 105.
\textsuperscript{127} Bryman 2001, p. 176.
\textsuperscript{128} Widerberg 2002, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., p. 128.
such. This was also sometimes the case with the reading circles, which may in turn have impacted on the results.

It was easier for me to visit the Lubuto Library unexpectedly as it is open to everyone in its surroundings. But even so, it may be difficult to avoid a situation where people adjust their behaviour because they have a visitor and an observer.

**5.3 Literature and Texts**

I have also studied literature and other text materials relevant to my research questions. There are a number of books and texts covering literacy and promoting reading. Many are dealing with the African context but very few are dealing with Zambia and the Zambian context.

I have searched for useful and relevant texts through databases where LISA, Library and Information Science Abstracts, was the main source. I have used some keywords like reading promotion, reading circles, literacy, reading culture, book bus library, Lubuto project, FAWEZA and Zambia, while searching in databases and on Internet. I also searched through bibliographies attached to books and articles. The literature provided the main source of information for my theoretical framework concerning reading promotion and literacy. I also studied reports and evaluations done on different projects, the curriculum for promoting reading in Zambian schools, as well as other texts of interest. These reports and evaluations the projects handed to me and some of the informants who provided me with background information orally also lent me some useful books. There may be other relevant texts to my study, which I have not found due to the fact that they have been written in other languages. It seems though, that most literature and texts dealing with my subject are written in English. The reason being that the language of instruction at schools and in the scientific research field in Zambia, is English.

**5.4 Selection of Projects and Schools**

I have selected three different projects for my study. The selection was made after an initial survey on what projects are in place. In doing so, I relied on embassy officials, who had knowledge in the field and I searched for projects at internet. Through my extensive contacts in Lusaka, I also inquired about possible projects. I decided to exclude three other projects because some of them were very recently established as Room to Read and Read beyond Zambia and the third one, the Children’s Reading Tents, didn’t have any real activities at the time. I came across the different projects by meeting a number of people and by generally asking around.

The reading circles at schools and the mobile libraries are administered by FAWEZA. I also studied the Lubuto Library project that creates libraries for vulnerable children. At the moment there is only one Lubuto library in Zambia although more are planned to be built.
I asked people at FAWEZA to assist me in selecting three target schools running the reading circles, preferably one in a wealthy area in Lusaka and one in a poorer area in the outer part of Lusaka and one in a mixed area. They suggested one school in a wealthy area and one from a poor area, which became part of this study and. The third proposed school did however not run the Reading Circles anymore because of the coordinator being ill at that school. Instead the last school was chosen by myself on the criteria that it was situated in a middle income area, and it was easily accessible to where I am living.

The Lubuto library is located in a shantytown area, called Kamwala in central Lusaka, and situated next to an orphanage driven by an organisation called Fountain of Hope and to a community school. There is only one Lubuto library at the moment.

There is only one book van, mobile library, visiting a number of high schools in Lusaka so I went out with the bus to two different high schools which were selected by the librarian, who monitors the mobile libraries. After the visit with the book van I came back another time for interviews at those schools.

5.5 Methodological Problems

It is difficult to properly understand what is taking place in a context different to your own. The way you as an investigator understand and assess what you see will be influenced by your own background and experience. You understand and interpret the answers to your questions with the help of your own context. What you observe is filtered through your own lenses shaped by your own background. While this is inevitable, it is something to be aware of when you are analysing your results.\textsuperscript{130}

To undertake a study in the context of Zambia also brings certain practical problems. Things you have planned for and meetings you have scheduled, will not always happen or take place, at least not in the way you had expected.

Quite often people do not arrive or they show up an hour later due to traffic problems or because the bus broke down. At other times people are attending funerals or are at home ill from diseases. While unexpected things of course happen in Sweden as well, the reality in Zambia is such that I found it more difficult to plan ahead and to schedule my arrangements.

When interviewing children I discovered that they were very polite and well behaved. I often sensed that they were afraid to tell me what they really felt, or that they tried to please me with what they thought I wanted to hear. I tried to “provoke” the older ones several times but I experienced the same response of politeness.

It was also difficult to find a quiet room or place to be alone with the pair or group of children and that might also have influenced the interviews and the minds of the pupils.

\textsuperscript{130} Bryman 2001, p. 166.
The schools in Lusaka are often overcrowded with pupils, so there is little space for undisturbed meetings.

At times the language was also an obstacle. The older children that were exposed to the mobile libraries and in some of the reading circles were quite fluent in English. Their ages were between 13 and 16. However, in one reading circle and also in the Lubuto library, I realised that the language was an obstacle and that the young informants between 10 and 14, sometimes had problems understanding my questions, as well as to explain themselves. During all interviews I had to rephrase the questions many times. This is also what Helene Thomson recommends. At one or two times the children helped each other with explaining or translating the questions.

Another methodological problem that I came across was what you may call pre-arranged situations. This was particularly the case with the mobile library. While they tried to perform just like they usually do it, I still felt like it was arranged just because I was visiting that day. I will use what I observed anyhow but I am aware of this situation when analysing my results from that occasion.

It was also difficult to get statistics from the three projects, either they did not do or keep statistics or it was difficult to do it on a regular basis. The statistics that was given to med was done by people already involved in the projects and can not therefore be considered as independently.

6. THREE PROJECTS FOR READING PROMOTION

During my field study I have come across the following reading promoting projects in Zambia.

The Forum for Women Education in Zambia, FAWEZA, is working with reading circles in about 60 schools. They also visit schools regularly with mobile libraries; “book buses”, to promote reading, books and other reading materials and to generally disseminate knowledge.

The Ministry of Education of Zambia together with Zambia Library Service, (ZLS), is trying to improve their organisation of some public libraries and some school libraries, all over Zambia. They also used to organise The Children’s reading tent but have not been able to carry out that project for quite some time.

The Lubuto Library project started in 2007 as an initiative taken by an American expatriate librarian. This library project is trying to establish well equipped libraries for the target groups of vulnerable children, such as street children and orphans and other children who have dropped out from school.

132 Informant 6 November 2007.
Read beyond Zambia is another project which tries to create a “reading culture” among Zambians by various methods. This project collects used books of various kinds and from people who give them away for free. The books are then distributed to schools with small resources.\textsuperscript{133}

There is also the organisation \textit{Room to Read} which has very recently started their work in Zambia. They are working to prevent girls from dropping out of school and also to build libraries in schools. They try to encourage reading but also publishing of local books. They are now in the process of register their organisation and of establishing contacts with the Ministry of Education and with some organisations similar to their own.\textsuperscript{134}

As some of these projects are quite new to Zambia and as the Reading tents seems no longer to be active, I will focus my study on FAWEZA`s two projects, working with literacy and reading as well as the Lubuto Library project, which started here in Lusaka in September 2007.

6.1 Mobile Libraries

Shortage of government funds to schools has resulted in most high schools being without reading and reference materials. As a result the reading culture and the learning achievement are compromised. High schools usually have a school library but the stock is often old and insufficient. It was in response to this generally dire situation that FAWEZA with funding from donors started a program called the Mobile Library serving schools in the Lusaka District. They have covered around 85 classes at 12 High schools with a total of 2523 participating students. Each school gets a visit twice a term when the mobile library lends out books. FAWEZA also run Mobile Libraries in two other provinces in Zambia, in Central Province and in the Copperbelt.\textsuperscript{135}

The goal of the Mobile Library is to complement government efforts to enhance the quality of education through the provision of relevant reference and reading materials. This is done by:

- Providing reference materials that stimulate research and broaden pupils´ knowledge
- Fostering a culture of reading for pleasure among pupils
- Providing teachers with extra lesson materials to improve the quality of teaching
- Improving examination results.

FAWEZA has assessed the participating pupils performances in English and Mathematics through data collected from schools. The two subjects were selected because they are compulsory. Tentative conclusions from the evaluation indicate that

\textsuperscript{133} Informant 7 February 2008.
\textsuperscript{134} Informant 8 January 2008.
\textsuperscript{135} Evaluation of The mobile library in Lusaka 2005, FAWEZA.
pupils’ have performed well with good results due to availability of reading materials in relevant subjects. Further assessment of performance will be conducted.\textsuperscript{136}

The demand for the service from the book buses is high and cannot be met. There are not enough books to reach every high school pupil. One mobile library in the shape of one book van is trying to reach out to at least 12 high schools in Lusaka. The numbers of pupils participating are likely to increase as new high schools are established in the Lusaka area. At the moment the bus can only cater for the morning classes but leaving out the afternoon classes who also want to participate in this program. There is a fee the participating High Schools have to pay to be able to use the services from the Mobile Libraries.\textsuperscript{137}

\textbf{6.2 Reading circles}

The reading circles program (RC) is a pilot project which aims to encourage a reading culture among boys and girls in primary schools. The project has so far intervened in selected schools in the four provinces Lusaka, Western, Luapula and Northern. The overall purpose of the reading circles is to contribute to improved learning achievement for girls and boys.\textsuperscript{138}

The three main objectives are:

- to stimulate a culture of reading among primary school pupils
- to improve pupils’ reading skills
- to enhance understanding and use of written language

There is a general and widespread problem that many students move on from first grade to last grade without acquiring the necessary skills of reading and writing. The problem is compounded by the fact that the majority of children encounter the English language for the first time when they are enrolled in grade one class. The “New Breakthrough to Literacy” program is helping but it is not enough. The children need to be practicing their reading skills and the books in class are not sufficient. Often there are three pupils sharing the same book.

The Reading Circles take place as an after school activity. The children taking part in this program are divided into groups of five to eight children. Each group is monitored by a leader with good reading skills; a “big sister” or “a big brother”. The idea is also for these group leaders to develop some leader skills at the same time. The Reading Circles are gathering once a week and all participants in each group are reading the same book. The “big sister or brother” is monitoring the groups, helping with reading, explaining words and so on. When finishing a book the groups are supposed to discuss together and write a common book report.\textsuperscript{139}

\textsuperscript{136} Profile on Mobile Library, FAWEZA Pamphlet.
\textsuperscript{137} Informant 9 FAWEZA March 2009.
\textsuperscript{138} Report on Reading Circles 2007.FAWEZA
\textsuperscript{139} Report on Reading Circles 2007.FAWEZA
6.3 Lubuto Library Project

The Lubuto Library project aims to create libraries of quality to serve Africa’s street children and other vulnerable children. The project: “seeks to provide an opening onto the world, education, hope and the simple pleasure of books”.  

Its stated goal is to give the increasing numbers of street children the opportunity of non-formal education, improving literacy, language skills, general knowledge and a possibility to participate in society. The mission of this project is twofold: to provide children in Zambia with a safe haven and a good and varied collection of appropriate books and enrichment programs, aimed at education and reconnection with their society at large.

In the USA the aim is to enlighten students about the impact of HIV/Aids on their peers in Zambia and to give them the opportunity to help in a meaningful way. American students are engaged in collecting and sorting out suitable books for the Lubuto libraries.

Lubuto is a word in the ciBemba language, spoken in central Africa and in Zambia, which means enlightenment, knowledge, and light. Librarians are usually aware that books have the power to inspire and transform, taking children out of their difficult lives and offering them a look into a world of possibilities. It is with this in mind that Lubuto Library is also offering storytelling, writing, art, music and drama in addition to its traditional library services. The first Lubuto library was opened in Lusaka in September 2007. At the moment it is the only one but one more is to be built in Monze in the southern part of Zambia and another one is planned for Garden compound in Lusaka’s outskirts.

This library is organized according to library principles, book titles are carefully selected to appeal to the young children and also to be useful within a Zambian context. The library consists of more than 4000 books. The library is located at the Kamwala compound, at the premises of Fountain of Hope, an organization working with street children. The library is open to the whole community of Kamwala shantytown. The staff working at Lubuto has tried to keep record of the number of visitors and also which books are used by the visitors. It is obvious that many children make use of the library, even though there is little statistics available.

Visitors are not allowed to borrow books from the library, they have to read and look at books while they are there. After finishing they put the books in a basket and then it is possible for the librarian to check how many and what types of books that were used.

The Lubuto Library project has agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education in Zambia. According to Jane Kinney Meyers the President of

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140 Annual Report 2007, Lubuto Library project.
141 Informant 5 January 2009.
142 Ibid.
143 Ibid.
Lubuto Project, the response from Zambian society and Government has been positive. Though she is keen to point out that the most important measure is the impact and reaction from the children participating in the project.

The project is depending on a number of volunteers to run the programs and the library. Lubuto targets children from the age of five to 18. Lubuto libraries are supposed to be hosted by existing community- based social service or educational organizations, who open the libraries to users at least 40 hours per week.

The Lubuto Library in Kamwala is built like a traditional part of a village. It consists of three huts, one is a reading room, one is a room for art and one is a place for meetings, talks and for washing hands, the Inshaka, before entering into the other rooms.

The indigenous design reinforces the children’s connection to their culture and helps them to reconnect with their society, following the isolation that is often part of their circumstances.\textsuperscript{145}

The Lubuto library project has been nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, ALMA, for the year of 2009.\textsuperscript{146}

7. RESULTS

In this chapter I will present results from the field study based on the interviews and observations I made at the different projects. While there is little statistical data available to substantiate changes generated by these projects, I have had to rely on assessments and opinions expressed by people involved, as well as my own observations.

7.1 The Mobile Libraries

The mobile libraries could in fact demonstrate, through an evaluation FAWEZA have done, that students who had participated in the project, had better results in English and Math compared to students from non-participating schools.\textsuperscript{147} This seems to illustrate that the mobile libraries had had some success in building competence. On the other hand it could be other factors, explaining the better results, such as factors connected to those High Schools or to those particular students visiting the book bus. This we can not know for sure.

The attitude to the project was overall positive among those I interviewed though, some asked for more frequent visits.

\textsuperscript{145} Informant 5 Lubuto January 2009.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{147} Evaluation Report 2007, Mobile Libraries, FAWEZA.
7.1.1 Observations

The Mobile Library is a reconstructed bus which moves around to various high schools in Lusaka and its outskirts. Inside the bus there are shelves where the books are stored. When the book-bus arrived the students lined up in long queues, all waiting to enter and to borrow a book. As the book room in the bus opened, students found the books in a mess. Books were lying down on shelves and they were not organized in any particular order. Non-fiction books were mixed with fiction. When the pupils entered four and four into the book room it took time, because it was difficult to find what they were looking for.

They were allowed to borrow one book each and the librarian assistant wrote down in a ledger their names, class and the book title. Each book had a number connected to it. When the first group had finished the next four pupils could enter. At the first high school, which I visited, the majority of students borrowed books connected to schoolwork like Maths, Science and Chemistry. At one High School which was only for girls the majority went for books to read for pleasure.

Before the students were allowed to borrow new books, the assistant checked that they had returned the old ones. The whole circulating-procedure took about 1-2 hours. The two high schools I visited had school libraries. The selections of books were a bit old and they often lacked books in certain subjects.

7.1.2 Opinions

To get a better picture of how the mobile libraries are working I interviewed four students as well as two of the teachers, coordinating the project at two high schools. I also interviewed the librarian who administrated the mobile libraries as well as his assistant.

It was clear that both teachers and students appreciated the visits from the mobile libraries and were happy with this opportunity to borrow books. All pupils and coordinators saw the book-bus as a good complement to the poorly equipped school libraries that already existed at the school. It was a wish among all that the mobile library should come more frequently.

All the persons whom I interviewed about this project thought that books from the mobile libraries were better connected to the curriculum. They also believed that they were able to succeed in their studies and exams by reading literature from the book-bus. These views were expressed by two students as follows:

The mobile library books are much easier to understand and they connect with our syllabus.

It helps me improving my English and also my Maths, cause I’m not so good at Maths so at least I get some help from them (Math Books). I take them home and I do study with my brother cause alone I can’t really manage.

The teacher-librarian also saw advantages with the project. He held the view that the project helped pupils with homework and study and also to develop their language and reading skills:
We go around collecting records. After the final exams we assess them who have access to the mobile libraries, and those who don’t, to see the differences. So there is a difference between the ones who participate in the programs and those who don’t. The ones who participated have 74% passing exams and the ones who didn’t have 69%.

At the moment the mobile libraries could only cater for the morning classes while the afternoon classes at high schools where left without visits from the book-bus.

7.1.3 Challenges

The main challenge, according to the librarian in charge of the mobile libraries, was the need for more vans and more books, which would enable them to cover more schools. At the time of my visit the mobile library covered 15 schools while quite a number of other schools had expressed an interest in becoming part of the project. There was also an issue of making sure that girls had access to the program as much as the boy.

7.1.4 Reading Materials

One important factor to reading and literacy is to get exposed to a wide range of different reading materials. As far as I could observe the mobile library was equipped with a wide range of reading materials both books for reference, study and books to just enjoy for pleasure. Most of the material was in English although there were also a few books in ciBemba and ciNyanja, the most common vernacular languages in Lusaka. The books were not on display in the book van. The books were on the shelves, standing or lying in a mess. There is a library coordinator at each school, participating in the mobile library program, and they are consulted in terms of need of books.

The librarian explained that they went around consulting the coordinators before purchasing the books in order to get a sense of what kind of books were in demand. At times they even bought up to 50 copies of one particular book.

As mentioned before most of the pupils preferred to borrow books for study but some had interest also in other types of books. One young girl answered my question on what kind of books she was reading by saying:

I like adventure stories with happy endings.

7.1.5 Views on Reading

One important goal for the mobile library is to foster a reading culture. It appears that the books were mainly borrowed with the purpose to get hold of reference materials for teachers and to improve examination results. Some of the students borrowed books to read for pleasure.

While there was a wide range of books and other kind of reading materials in the bus providing the students with a choice, most of them took a book for studying. The reason appeared to be that they were only allowed to borrow one book.

Almost all the children whom I interviewed said that reading is important if you want to get a job. Books and reading were seen as necessary to achieve their goals and to
improve their results in exams. However there were exceptions. At one of the high schools I observed that the girls were choosing only books from the mobile library to read for pleasure, “Sabrina the teenage witch “was obviously a favorite among a number of girls, but also other fiction literature found their way to an interested reader. One girl expressed her view on reading like this:

Reading it helps you like in English, it helps you because if you read a lot of storybooks even your English will be more advanced and also with spelling for these words and you get to know new words. I have just one storybook at home.

7.2 The Reading Circles

As regards the reading circles, there was a general view among the teachers I interviewed that students who had taken part in the circles had improved their reading skills. The attitude towards the reading circles was generally positive. It was difficult to assess whether these reading circles had led to any behavioural changes. What came out clearly is that students had gained knowledge in Hiv/Aids, as all literature available within the circles, dealt with this subject.

7.2.1 Observations

I observed Reading Circles at three different schools. The reading circles are an after school activity which takes place once school has finished. It is optional, however, some teachers advise their pupils to take part in order to improve their reading. The first reading circle I visited was at a school with very limited space and the circle was about to take place outside.

First the teacher danced and sang together with the children and the participants shared news or “letters” with each other. This meant telling each others about an event that happened recently, which you had read about in newspapers, heard on the radio, watched on television or something someone had told you. This telling and- reading session was complemented with more dancing and singing in ciNyanja. Then the children split into groups of about seven to eight. Each member in the group was reading the same book, all the books were storybooks closely connected to issues about Hiv / Aids.

On this very occasion, just as they were about to start reading, everyone had to rush inside because of the heavy rain that began. All the groups had to squeeze into a small classroom which was not used for teaching since the roof was broken. The pupils sat down on the floor in their respective groups and continued with the reading for about twenty minutes. Then they all formed a circle and sang and danced and some of the pupils shared what they read and learned that day. About 40 children were taking part in the reading circles the day I visited. One teacher was coordinating the groups and each group was monitored by one ‘big sister’ or one ‘big brother’, leading the work in the group and helping the other group members. They assisted by showing the reading direction, correcting the group members when they were reading loud and also in explaining words that were not understood.
At the next place I visited, the reading circle used an Assembly hall, where all groups could sit on chairs in circles. Here the participants dropped in and went to their groups after a sports day and after a while the groups were full. They read the same books here as at the other place and after finishing a book the group together answered some questions and wrote the answers down on a piece of paper. The teacher went around among the groups to listen and to assist.

The third visit became just an interview with two “big sisters” and the coordinating teacher. The reason was that the coordinator had decided to focus on the education of five girls to become leaders, ”big sisters” for the circles and they in return were supposed to educate the others. The problem at this school was lack of space and the coordinator wished for a reading tent to put all the RC groups in.

7.2.2 Opinions

At each of the three schools, I interviewed the coordinators, who were all female teachers, and in charge of running the reading circle at that school. I also interviewed all in all eleven pupils to hear their opinions about the reading circles. The general message was that they were happy and enthusiastic about the circles and that they were inspired to read more books.

The participating children agreed that the reading circles were important but all of them were a bit tired about the very same subject on all books given by FAWEZA to the Reading Circles. All books were about HIV/Aids issues and the children I interviewed were hoping for other books which would be about other children in other communities. One child said:

Reading Circles is a very important and a very good club and everyone should join in. I would like to have it twice a week. Almost all the books we have here are talking about HIV and Aids. I just would like to have some other books. Books who could talk about children that would meet in other communities.

At one of the reading circles they also shared news, something which was also appreciated by the children. This was expressed by one young participant:

I really like sharing news cause it teaches children that they should be watching the news. We should make some stories about what we learned from the news.

Another issue that was brought up was that the reading circles are not only about reading but also about gaining self confidence and empower the girl child. One teacher told me this about the reading circles:

They are important because it invigorate a reading culture and leadership qualities in the girl child. They get more confident and public speakers and they read out of interest. They also practise reading skills. They (the reading circles) also sometimes take away the pressure. It creates something in them. They present the story they have read in a drama or a song that is very important.

While participating in the Reading Circles the pupils also gained other skills than reading. One message that came through clearly was the social interaction among pupils. The Reading Circles provided a forum which combined a sharing what they read with the actual learning to read. One teacher put it like this:
They share a lot. When completing a story they write a book report on the book together. They share the story while working together. So even when they are back in class the teachers say they have changed. Some they come here shy but at the time they leave the circles by grade 7 they are more self-confident.

Finally one more opinion from a young informant:

Reading circle is educating. It makes it easier while you are in class- It makes you more open to your friends. Is really helping us cause it’s improving the way we read. We learn a lot of thing like a reading habit, so it is really a good thing. We learn a lot of things cause you always get something out from whatever you read. I like everything about the reading circle.

7.2.3 Challenges

With a large number of pupils in each class, scarce resources and lack of teaching materials, the challenges for Zambian teachers are immense. A typical complaint I heard teachers mention was the difficulties to teach in very large groups, a problem compounded by the lack of books and reading materials. A common comment was that “we have too many children and too few books”.

A common challenge was the lack of continuity in the participating groups and the limited space or no classrooms available at all for the run reading circles. Some coordinating teachers said that the task at times was too much of a burden. They talked about being on their own to cope with growing numbers of children wanting to join, about drop outs, and kids needing special attention. Another problem for the primary schools which are running this program was the lack of school libraries.

7.2.4 Reading Materials

The only books I came across in my contacts with the Reading Circles were dealing with HIV/Aids. The schools participating in Reading Circles had received books as gifts and as part of the project from FAWEZA. There was only one small library with around 50-100 quite old books at one of the schools I visited for this project and those books were not really for children. I could not find anything which would indicate that the children in this Reading Circle Project were exposed to a wide range of books.

Both children and the teachers expressed a wish for books with other types of subjects than HIV and Aids. The children mentioned books about animals, adventures or fairy tales. On the teacher lists were books with Zambian folk tales and stories as well as other subjects:

Zambian stories are good because it is stories that children can relate to. If they talk about a bongololo at least they know what a bongololo is. 148

7.2.5 Views on Reading

The books I have seen being used in the reading circles, were all stories about HIV and Aids and how to protect yourself and not to be afraid and avoid people that are infected

148 A bongololo is a centipede.
with the disease. I asked the children why they thought it was important to be able to read and write and what they usually read:

It is important to know how to read and write because in any country to which you go you need to read and write and if you are given a paper in any language I can read it. As long as you know how to read and write it will go very well anywhere you go. I asked my uncle and he told me that reading also makes you know more.

It is just good to know how to read and write so when we go and look for jobs they will hire us then-

If you don’t know how to read you cannot be a lawyer you cannot be what you want to be. I would like to be a lawyer or a pilot.

I like studying in my books. I have some books at home that teach about Aids and other books that are there are Christianity. I try to read those books so that I know some of the religion as for example is someone talks about religion ai know that this is what happens in that religion. I most read books like just the syllabus of the school and some of the reading circle books as well. No I am not really reading for fun. I read books for my own benefit, just help me to learn from books.

I like reading novel cause when you read you learn a lot of different things. Someone can just come and tell you something, when you read it on your own you understand it better.

Almost all if not all the children I interviewed had an instrumental view on reading. The purpose with their reading was to gain knowledge and become better readers. Though some students confessed to reading novels and it appeared that a particular favourite among the girls was the book titled ‘Sabrina the teenage witch’

The teachers I interviewed shared the instrumental view on reading as an essential part of any academic achievement. However, they asked for a greater variety of books, like stories about things happening in other countries. It was pointed out that most children did not have access to books at their homes, except for perhaps some religious material.

The question of using English versus local language as the tool of instruction in schools came up in my interviews, and so did the issue of oral tradition in contrast to a reading culture. The opinions among the children and teachers I interviewed on this matter varied. According to the program officer of FAWEZA, the use of your local language is not that important when you first learn how to read. Instead the officer held the view that English is necessary as all exams are taken in that language. And she pointed to another problem:

There are too few books in local languages and few Zambian writers. There are no books in nyanja. They learn to read in nyanja but with reading circles it is just English. But we mix languages when we are sharing news and what they have read and we sing in Nyanja as well”.

How local and foreign languages were being was illustrated by the comment of one student:

I only speak the vernacular. It is Nyanja. I read in English and I am not very good at Nyanja. We have got a syllabus for Nyanja and I used to read in Nyanja from grade 1 to grade 4. But not anymore because the syllabus doesn’t show that.

As to the existence of a living oral tradition and a reading culture in Zambia, I met a variety of opinions from teachers. Some said that there existed no reading culture, while
others held a view to the contrary. However, there was a consensus among those I interviewed that the lack of books at home presented a real obstacle in promoting such reading culture.

On storytelling, I heard among others the following views:

They do tell stories at school but not very much. A few can tell stories but not all the children. In the rural areas, yes, but not in the urban areas. It’s very difficult. Where some of the children come from they watch television and play videogames so there are no time for storytelling. And the parents have no time for storytelling because they come home very late. It's disappearing a bit.

7.3 The Lubuto Library Project

The Lubuto project has several programmes, connected to the library, such as storytelling, arts and drama. The general attitude towards the library and what it offers was very positive. The project is only one year into existence and it is still too early to assess what possible changes it may have generated in terms of competence and knowledge.

Lubuto library has established the equivalent of a caring library, accessible to all children, especially those who cannot attend school. It is a place for learning through storytelling, mentoring and reading good books. It is also a place of safety for street children and other vulnerable groups of kids. I have observed programs taking place within the library as well as children reading on their own or being read to.

I have interviewed four children frequently visiting the Lubuto library as well as the librarian manager and an American librarian working with the Lubuto library for over six months. The overall opinion about Lubuto is very positive and everyone I have spoken to sees it as a good place.

7.3.1 Observations

The library consists of three traditional African huts of which one is the reading room, one is the art room and one without walls is the meeting place, the Inshaka. There is a basin with water to wash your hands before you enter the library. The reading room is a beautiful place with lots of books, around 4000 volumes. About half of the round building is filled with fiction books and the other half is non-fiction.

The books are selected to suit African children. There are benches to sit on to read along the walls and a desk for the librarian beside the entrance. In the middle is a circled place with a step to sit on for storytelling and reading aloud. There is a framed map of the world on the wall and some wooden animals hanging down from the roof. Beside the desk is a basket for used books.

I have observed different programs taken place and I divide these occasions into: storytelling, reading aloud, reading by themselves. Storytelling is taking place in ciBemba but the participating children could also use ciNyanja while discussing the story or presenting something afterwards. If a story is told in English a translator is needed and if an adult is not around one of the children that is good at English has to stand in.
Storytelling takes place on the floor circle in the middle of the reading room. Storytelling usually ends with a discussion and talk about the story.

When reading aloud takes place the benches or the circle is used depending on the number of participating children. When the users are reading or making use of the books themselves they usually sit on the benches. There are usually a great number of kids taking part in these kinds of different reading activities although I don’t have much statistics to document it.

7.3.2 Opinions

Many of the visitors see the library as a good and safe place to be and they like reading the books. The librarian told me:

Lubuto library is a really good idea. Now the children from the streets have access to special books which they can read. Lubuto helps! We have kids they don’t go to school and it will improve their reading skills. They learn about places. It will also help kids to get an interest in books, especially on Saturdays when kids will come for storytelling, motivation talk and mentoring it’s good for behavioural change.

One of the young visitors in the library told me:

It’s a good idea. Is a good place to be. I like the books in here. I like listening to stories. Many people go here. It’s good.

The story teller and motivational trainer gave the following details:

Books are in there. I think it’s a challenge, it is a new experiment. It needs to evaluate to see the impact it is putting on the kids because for example many of the kids don’t read. Due to what they have passed through, if they read it is on a very elementary level. The books at Lubuto are on different level and it would be good to see and record what the kids take particular interest in, what they choose to read and on what level. I think if the reading should work it must be a book which is stimulating and of interest to the child And a stimulation to the mind.

It is obvious that besides reading, the library serves other purposes and functions and you learn more than just reading. The theatre projects run by the “Barefeet Theatre” twice a week helps them to interact and to get to know each other and keeps people together.

7.3.3 Challenges

Many of the children who visit Lubuto don’t know how to read or write and this presents the library with a challenge of its own. To the librarian it was clear that priority was on literacy:

I don’t know what to say when children grab my arm and say ”teach me how to read”. Then I don’t know how to respond.

The Lubuto Library also struggled with other challenges such as finding more people who could do volunteer work and link up with the library staff. A major question was how to reach out to more kids on the streets and letting them know about the existence of Lubuto. In short the library was dealing with all the day-to-day problems of making
sure that it was kept open, trained teachers or aides to be around, and in reaching out to street kids. The librarian put it like this:

We need more people to get involved in the library a lot of people are using the library but not so many help. We need more people to help with reading as many of the kids can’t read.

However, there was also an evident ambition to expand and to improve. The librarian was hoping to get access to Internet and to have computers in the library. She envisages a more structured way to do library work and to promote the collection of books and information. The library was only the first in a series to be constructed. The aim was to create a network between librarians and libraries and community centres.

One problem is that a lot of books in the collections have been disappearing from the reading room although the visitors are not allowed to take away books from the library. Some of the children are asking for tables in the reading room so they can take notes while reading or maybe draw pictures from books.

7.3.4 Reading Material

The library offers a large number of books to the visitors. It is organised in a way that makes it quite easy to find the books. The collection was selected by people in USA to appeal to this target group of Zambian children. Many books are relevant to Lubuto children while others may not be. Many of the books are however great and useful to the kids and teachers:

They are always fighting for the fairytale books. The classic fairy tales about Cinderella and so on. Then they can sit there for hours while I am going over the books and they are reading. I think we need more books on Zambia and more books on subjects that really attract the users like books with a lot of pictures and photographs and diagrams.

The library manager argued that the library needs more books that are used for education courses and within the ordinary school curriculum. Another request was for more books in the vernacular languages and for materials providing for bilingual reading.

In my interviews with the children it was evident that many of the children at the Lubuto library enjoyed the books:

“I like to read books like “Curious George. We also need more picture books in the library because more picture books can teach someone how to read”.

“I like to read about science and Cinderella.”

7.3.5 Views on Reading

A lot of the visitors to Lubuto library don’t speak much English as a result of living in the streets and not being at school. There are around 20-30 books in ciNyanja and ciBemba in the whole library. English is definitely a second language to the majority of the visitors to Lubuto. The people in charge of the different programs connected to Lubuto try to adapt their language so that the children are able to understand. The storyteller commented on his first visit to Lubuto:
When I first came to the Lubuto I asked the children in my group: "What language do you all understand?". And they all said Bemba, so with 95% of them understanding Bemba, I tell them stories in Bemba. I also understand Nyanja, but I can’t speak it but the ones who want can use Nyanja when they speak and I can understand them.

The librarian, who worked as one of the volunteers, noted that there are other books in vernacular languages around but a lot of them are religious and that is really not what Lubuto wants to promote. She also observed that while people read newspapers, you rarely see people reading books. The man with the storytelling program for motivational training echoed similar sentiments and argued that there was no reading culture around. He lamented this situation as reading is one activity that stimulates the mind. His own approach at Lubuto was this:

I tell them stories /.../ with a theme that teaches them a positive mental attitude. Some of the stories I pick up I find in books and some I just make them up. These kids from the streets they lack self-confidence, discipline and courage, so I try to build that in them through stories. I encourage them to stand up when retelling and discussing the stories, it will give them confidence to talk and train their speaking ability. They share what they experienced from the story and will get better self-esteem.

According to the librarian, many factors are involved when an oral tradition is changing into a reading culture. The grandmothers, “ambujas”, are overburdened by responsibilities as their sons and daughters have died from Aids leaving children to be taken care of, and so there is no time to keep up the tradition of storytelling.

She believes that the users of the Lubuto library read both for pleasure and for studying. However, the distinction between the two should not be overstated, saying that reading for fun is also a process of learning.

The visitors themselves also think it is something to gain from reading books. This is how three children put it:

It’s important to read because, if I read a book about a reptile and then we learn about reptile in school and I can remember that I read a book about reptiles so I can answer that question.

It’s just good to know how to read and write so when we go and look for jobs they will hire us then-

I would like to be a lawyer here in Lusaka. I can’t be that without reading and writing. About writing you can’t depend on someone else to write for you. It means a lot to write on your own.

7.4 Supportive Environment

All adults engaged in these three projects were obviously trying to stimulate reading among the participating children. To them reading was the road towards gaining better results in school and bringing better self-confidence to the children. As for the reading circles there was also an element of promoting leadership skills.
There is substantial research, by for example Magara, which argues that to be successful you must start literacy at home.\textsuperscript{149} While this issue also surfaced in my interviews, it was not possible to actually study if such conditions prevailed for the young participants I came across. Given how expensive books are for most people in Zambia, I have however reason to believe that books are scarce in many homes. This does not exclude the existence of storytelling and that some books are available even for shared reading. Those students who mentioned having books at home often referred to text books or religious literature from a particular church.

8. ANALYSIS

My study shows that the three projects have formulated more or less the same goals though with some different variations. The emphasis is on promoting a reading culture, to improve reading skills and to facilitate education. It is noticeable that the mobile library talks about “fostering” reading culture while the Lubuto project and Reading Circles use the words such as “enhance”, “stimulate” and “provide opportunity”. These different concepts in fact reflect the “project culture” as I came across them. The mobile library had more of a traditional approach compared to the others.

In this chapter I will analyse my findings and observations and I will make use of the theoretical approach as I give answers to my research questions. Suffice to say at this stage that it became obvious from my field study that the “sophisticated” theoretical approach given does not easily square with the rather dire realities that the studied projects are faced with. The more deeply rooted challenges about relating literacy to a cultural meaning system go hand in hand with practical problems such as finding a roof against the rains, keeping book shelves in order, and preventing thefts of books etc. However, as I will try to demonstrate the theoretical framework is useful in a number of ways to assess the relevance and importance of the projects.

8.1 Opinions about the Projects

Through my interviews it became evident that these projects were highly appreciated by the students and children as well as by the teachers. The projects responded to an obvious demand even though they had trouble in meeting all the expectations and to respond to all the requests for services. The projects were, despite their obvious limitations, all seen as important to develop reading skills and to some extent to satisfy the pleasure of reading books. The projects had clearly managed to stimulate a demand that went beyond the kind of services they were at present able to offer.

The participants asked for more books, for more visits and for more occasions to study. I believe that this demand in itself can be taken as proof of the success of these projects. However, you may also interpret this positive response and great demand for service as an indication on how little is being offered elsewhere to these students and children. The

\textsuperscript{149} Magara 2005.
number of venues and opportunities to read are few and so these projects become “havens” in satisfying young people’s need for literacy. This is perhaps not surprising given that Zambia, as described in Chapter 2, is a poor country where scarcity is the general norm. There are few public libraries, the book market is fairly limited, and perhaps most importantly school classes are as a rule overcrowded.

In my study I also found that the projects offered the participants opportunities to build on self esteem, interaction with others, leadership training and new knowledge. At least, the projects were seen by the participants to hold out such promises. It was anyhow obvious from what I observed that the participants fully enjoyed what they were doing when taken part in the projects’ activities.

The coordinators and teachers demonstrated a clear sense of wanting to project a reading culture to the participants. While struggling with limited resources, and having complaints about too little books or materials available, they made use of their own knowledge and skills in addressing large groups of participants. The projects use of oral tradition, albeit in varying degrees, of story-telling and social interaction was popular. Hence, I could witness in practice what Knuth argues is literacy constructed on local knowledge in which the oral culture provides a context for reading.  

What also came out in my interviews was an emphasis by teachers and coordinators in building positive attitudes towards reading and not only focusing on methods. This approach has been found useful by among others Elley in his findings.

In all three projects, and in particular with the mobile libraries, the young visitors demonstrated a clear instrumental view towards reading. The mobile libraries were seen as offering opportunities to borrow books which were better tailored to the students’ curriculum. Furhammar’s distinction between instrumental and experienced reading is in this regard helpful as it illuminates why young people lined up in queues to borrow one single book. Although some children went for fiction books, my interviews illustrate what Machet and Wessel have observed as literacy being strongly associated with schools and studies.

8.2 Challenges Confronted by the Projects

It would be easy to list all the practical obstacles faced by these projects and which essentially related to a lack of resources. I have already in my introductory remarks alluded to some of the ever returning problems to which practical solutions had to be found in order to keep the projects going.

I also found some less visible challenges to these projects, which you may argue are of a more fundamental nature. In my observations, I found that these three projects were in

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150 Knuth 1998.
152 Furhammar 1996.
153 Machet & Wessel 2006.
various ways struggling with how they should connect to an environment which, generally speaking, understands literacy in a fairly narrow and instrumental way.

As I described in Chapter 2, education is highly regarded in Zambian society. Literacy is squarely placed within the context of education with an emphasis on textbooks, in achieving school results, and ultimately with the prospects of moving socially upwards to a better standard of life. Clearly, this is a reasonable and fully legitimate way to look at literacy. But does it miss out on something? One view that kept coming back in my interviews was the lack of a supporting environment to reading. Given this situation, I would say that the projects are confronted by a challenge observed by Makenzi who argues that a reading culture needs to begin at home within the family and also by the findings of Elley, who emphasises the general attitude in society towards reading as essential in promoting reading.

The projects I studied attempted in varying degrees to relate literacy to social interaction, as advocated by Verhoeven, and to place literacy within the children’s own life experiences and history. In doing so, the activities appeared to contrast with the general perception in society about reading as primarily an exercise at school. In fact, the projects may have set ambitions in the direction of promoting literacy in a broader sense but for different reasons have had to fall back into a more instrumental or educational approach.

Given that literacy has to thrive on the ‘oxygen’ emanating from what the individual perceives as a meaningful culture, these projects will be on an uphill battle until the surrounding environments more generally takes on board this broader understanding of what literacy actually means. Several of the teachers and coordinators, whom I met, recognised and demonstrated such an understanding of and approach to literacy. The means available to them were at times helpful but that was not always the case. Hence, the external environment was not necessarily supportive.

### 8.3 Books and Reading Materials

Verhoeven talks about a wide range of reading materials as an important factor to gain reading-skills and literacy as well as creating a reading culture. The Lubuto library was exemplary in this sense as it could offer a wide range of reading materials. There were several thousands of books, both fiction and non-fiction, at various levels, and especially composed to attract children at different ages. A large number of children used those books.

As the main part of the books were in English, it was however difficult for some of the visitors to read them. Only about fifty books were written in vernacular languages and

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155 Makenzi 2006.
158 Furhammar 1996.
159 Verhoeven 2001.
only in two of these namely; ciBemba and ciNyanja. The Lubuto Library also offers a lot of topics related to Zambia and Africa including books written by African authors. You would however also find books on the shelves which are not so relevant for the visitors.

The Mobile Libraries exhibited a wide range of reading materials although almost everything was written in English. A critical point could be made about the mobile library where you were allowed to borrow only one book at a time and the book van only appearing two or three times per term.

The Reading Circles had established opportunities to practice, sharing and enjoy books. But they just had books about one topic so once the pupils had finished all the books on HIV/AIDS, there was nothing else to read. Though this was not of own choosing, the limited scope of reading material stands in stark contrast to Furhammar’s observation about offering both instrumental and experienced reading. This was really a pity as clearly many students had a desire to read more books. Surely, it is not an inspiring path to enhance a reading culture when the only subject around is about a contagious disease.

As I observed these three projects, I was impressed by what you can achieve with very little means. In particular the Reading Circles lacked a variety of reading material, again this illustrated a common situation in Zambia, where you have to rely on what is available or offered rather than on your own thought out design. However, thanks to skilful teachers, the reading circles were able to make up stories together through, for instance, “the sharing of news”, which I found to be a good example of what Verhoeven would call scaffolding and socially interacting with each other.

In one of the reading circles, the teachers cleverly built their lessons on social interaction and drew on current events relevant to the students. While reading about HIV/AIDS relates to real life, it is difficult to see how this subject, being the only written material available, could promote literacy beyond a certain degree.

At the Lubuto Library efforts were made to bridge the oral tradition to the written language, though it was sporadic and as always it relied on individuals devoting their volunteer time. The Lubuto library offered books in vernacular languages, and children were encouraged to read on their own or together with others. You may see these activities as, Knuth would say, constructing literacy on local knowledge.

It was interesting to see how the Lubuto Library tried to address what school reformers in Zambia have been struggling with over time. As described in Chapter 2, the question of whether to use vernacular or the English language as the mode of instruction at school, particularly at primary level, has been the heart of the education policy. And it may also here be noted that the Breakthrough to Literacy, introducing the vernacular language, was seen as a great success.

160 Furhammar 1996.
161 Verhoeven 2001.
The mobile libraries offered not only textbooks but a whole range of fiction literature and thus demonstrate a broader ambition with literacy. However, trying to cope with an overwhelming demand from students, loans were restricted to one book, which tended to exclude the fiction books.

8.4 Views about Reading

The common goal for these three projects was to enhance a reading culture. In my interviews I found that most of the children and adults looked upon reading as a means to get a job or to achieve good results at exams. Reading was done with the purpose to gain knowledge and to have a goal outside the specific reading situation. This attitude towards reading came out in response to my question about reading, though it could to some extent have been dictated by a desire to provide the “right and proper” answers to an adult.

As education in Zambia is largely taking place in a book based context, these views are really not surprising. Many were talking about the lack of a reading culture in society at several levels and that books were strongly connected to studying. Still, there were some who believed that Zambia had a reading culture although it could be stronger or more evident.

Some of the children I interviewed also stressed that they enjoyed reading for pleasure, and mentioned books like Cinderella, Curious George or Harry Potter. Of course, you learn something at the same time as you are reading for pleasure and studying might have its pleasant moments.

There were suggestions from some of the teachers that more reading, and in particular in the way that was demonstrated by the reading circles, ought to become part of the curriculum for education in Zambia. The few hours that each pupil actually attends school in Zambia prevent extensive reading, something which is exacerbated by the poor access to books in many homes. The reading circles hence play an important role as an after school activity. Makenzi argues for the importance for reading and literacy in order for a nation to develop and describes it also as a rewarding pursuit. Whether literacy brings empowerment or not, a proposition questioned by Brian Street, field study by Makenzi shows that the participating children also gained leadership skills and confidence.

8.5 Reading within Your own Culture

I have so far analysed the results of my four research questions. On this basis, what analytical synthesis could possibly be made about how the three projects are able to

164 Makenzi 2004, Reaching out to the less advantaged.
165 Street 2001.
166 Makenzi 2004, Reaching out to the less advantaged.
relate literacy to the culture a young person belongs to in Zambia? I will approach this question by applying three complimentary perspectives, as I outlined in chapter 4.4.

In my study I found a mixed albeit predominantly positive picture in terms of how the projects were able to promote reading within a cultural meaningful system. The opinions voiced by the students pointed in this direction. The reading material available differed between the projects. However, it was noticeable that the Lubuto Library Project demonstrated a conscious effort to bring into their library, books written in vernacular languages, and to choose books which related to local culture. The Reading Circles suffered from relying on a single kind of theme, though this was not by their own choosing, as I understood, but rather a result of “you take what you get”. The mobile libraries had a wide variety of books, though lending was biased towards text books, which does not necessarily mean that such books cannot be placed within a cultural meaningful system.

The challenges I found were rather related to the surrounding environment in which reading is closely connected with schooling and teaching. It is an environment which looks upon reading as a necessary tool for achieving an education, and not as a means to enrich your own life by bringing reflections and perspectives unto your own culture. As I have described in Chapter 2, while Government reforms have led to the introduction of vernacular language, education is still to a large extent modeled on a colonial heritage, and not on your own local culture. Placed in this context, reading may hold the prospects of social advancement, though it seems it would come at the expense of making it culturally meaningful.

With this setting, it is interesting to note the extent to which the projects tried to overcome this challenge of reading being biased against your own culture. Clearly, both the Lubuto Library Project and the Reading Circles had chosen a transactional approach, with an emphasis on social interaction, towards the promotion of reading. The Lubuto Library relied on story telling, and on reading aloud from books, as ways to bridge oral tradition to the written word. The Reading Circles used their written material as a basis for discussions and presentations, in what Verhoeven calls “scaffolding” as a means to facilitate reading.

It was clear that an instrumental view prevailed towards reading among the children I interviewed. While such a view is not contrary to the promotion of a culturally meaningful reading, it nonetheless underscores the general attitude in society as to why you engage in reading. You may argue that by promoting an experienced kind of reading, the children would be encouraged to find other dimensions to reading than those merely related to education. While such opportunities surely existed, I did not observe any concerted efforts in this direction, with the possible exception of the Lubuto Library Project.

In sum, the three projects demonstrated within their limits an understanding that literacy needs to relate to your own culture. The projects managed in varying degrees to respond to this challenge. Finally, it seems important to mention that while reading has to make sense culturally, these projects did not operate in an environment consisting of two or several cultures distinguished or separated from each other. As in other countries,
Zambia presents a situation where various local cultures over time have blended with the influences and norms brought from outside, in particular with the colonial history. You may in fact argue that the challenge lies in relating literacy to a culture composed of multiple dimensions.

9. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

As I went about with my field study, visiting the projects and talking to the people involved, I gradually came to recognise the sheer complexity in actually running these projects and doing so with some success. The layers of obstacles are numerous. They range from the very basics such as shelter against rains, finding a space to read, lack of money and books, to organizational issues such as dependence on a few committed people, reliance on other bodies for administration and funding. The projects were struggling with an environment which was far from being supportive but rather appeared prone to wear activities down.

However thanks to people who demonstrated a combination of commitment, ingenuity and stubbornness, activities took place, reading circles were held, and libraries were kept open.

In my concluding discussion, I will draw on the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 5, and focus on what I consider to be three complimentary perspectives. I believe that these perspectives shed light on some of the underlying challenges confronted by these projects I studied. In short, I will discuss how the individual projects have tried to relate to a meaningful culture and hence bring “oxygen” into their activities. Furthermore, I will discuss whether a transactional approach presents a way to overcome obstacles to reading promotion, and in this context I will also address the distinction between instrumental and experienced reading. And finally I will make some general reflections on what possible steps could be taken to better relate literacy to culture in Zambia.

9.1 Reading which Makes Sense

The argument that literacy depends on gaining membership in a community was vividly illustrated at the Luboto Library. Many of the visitors to Lubuto Library were street children with a membership in the “street community” but without access to the “ordinary” community. As I saw these children entering the library, watching with fascination rows of book shelves, filled with thousands of books, carrying titles about geography, history and science fiction, little imagination was required in asking how to bridge their reality with the world of books.

To these children, Lubuto played an important role in offering a new kind of membership. It offered a pleasant library and a safe haven for them. It is a good place to meet with other citizens living in Lusaka and in the Kamwala compound. However,
what does it take to promote reading, which fits into a culturally meaningful system in the eyes of the reader?

Hopefully, the Lubuto Library facilitates the way back to a new and a more decent life in a normal cultural setting. The library was conscious about the necessity to bridge that gap between two sets of realities. When the professor had his motivational training at ciBemba, recounting stories and concepts from the children’s original cultural sphere, you may see it as an effort to bring reading into a cultural meaning system. These were also stories which may have been lost and hard to find elsewhere.

The challenge confronted by all the three projects to promote a reading culture must also be seen in the context of a country which not that long ago relied primarily on an oral culture. Add to that, the challenge that written text and stories are primarily in a foreign language like English and then contrast this situation with the argument that you become literate as you act within your community. What emerges could perhaps be described as an uphill battle for any child to acquire the skills of reading and becoming literate, particularly so if you live under otherwise difficult circumstances.

Lubuto also tried to encourage a non-formal education within the doors of the library. This was done in an attempt to address the particular problem faced by these children who had spent so much time “on the streets” and without formal education. Some of the visitors did not know how to read at all but enjoyed the books from looking at the pictures. Programs were designed in either ciBemba or ciNyanja, as the written media were mainly in the foreign language of English, and hence not accessible to most of these children. It was obvious that many children liked the picture storybooks in ciNyanja or ciBemba.

In my mind, the question of a second language, with all its connotations of symbolism and values, has a clear bearing on Serpell’s discussion on a cultural meaning system. You may also argue that the use of a foreign language presents an obstacle to Verhoeven’s emphasis of social interaction as a means of promoting reading. The Lubuto Library and the Reading Circles illustrated how teachers and other engaged volunteers in practice struggle with providing reading activities which related to the student’s /child’s own reality. The circumstances were not benign to what Serpell calls a cultural meaningful system, though this was counter balanced by the ingenuity and “creative” thinking demonstrated by the people involved.

9.2 Different Ways of Reading

Furhammar’s perspective is helpful in this context as it helps us to distinguish between instrumental and experienced reading. The students I meet in my study held a predominantly instrumental view as reading was seen as a way for social advancement. Such advancement has in Zambia to a large extent meant, as Serpell has observed, an

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extractive process of leaving your own cultural sphere to acquire another cultural system, offering the prospects of a better life.

You may argue that in such a situation, providing space for experienced reading becomes all the more important as it would allow you to retain reading which connects to your own cultural meaning system. Anyhow, it seems clear that any approach to reading promotion will have to take this distinction between experienced and instrumental reading into account as it suggests the necessity to engage in different strategies depending on the kind of reading.

The activities of the projects highlighted the more general and difficult dilemma Zambia as a society confronts in terms of promoting literacy and a culture of reading. The number of books in English at a library aimed for children who have had no or little schooling, and would speak another language as their own, illustrated starkly that literacy have to be placed in a cultural context.

What emerges is a mixed picture in terms of providing materials within a cultural meaningful system. Serpell’s observations based on his own research\footnote{Serpell 2001.} are to some extent also reflected in my findings. Students have to cope with reading in a foreign language and many of the books deal with subjects with little relation to the reader’s own background or environment. Taken together, the demand on the reader to comprehend and put into context what he or she reads is likely to be high. Though the picture is by no means uniform and some reading materials were likely to be more accessible to the reader than others.

\section*{9.3 Reading as Shared Activity}

Verhoeven argues that shared reading is important to develop the skills and interests for reading.\footnote{Verhoeven 2001.} All three of my projects show evidence of shared reading, although not so obvious at the mobile library. The storytelling at Lubuto is one example of shared reading. It is striking to note how lots of kids were sitting together in the library and looked through or even read the same books. Some people came in now and then and read aloud to the kids. Storytelling or reading aloud was also practised when for example school classes came to visit.

Examples of shared reading were also obvious while the group members in the Reading Circles were reading together, sharing stories or completed the book report together. In the queues while waiting to enter the book van, pupils were sharing books and had a good time enjoying books together. While waiting some of the girls at one school told me about common experiences of reading and from sharing books.

I agree with Verhoeven that shared reading is important to develop literacy and maybe it would be possible to use it more often and develop it further on within the projects.
I noticed while observing the Lubuto Library that many of the children sat together in the library, sharing books and stories and pictures in the books. They laughed and seemed to have a good time at the same time as they were using books. This struck me as important when you want to enhance a reading culture. Learning through transaction and social interaction are also important factors according to Verhoeven when it comes to enhance literacy and reading.

As I observed these three projects, I was impressed by what you can achieve with very little means. In particular the Reading Circles lacked a variety of reading materials, in fact they were stuck with books about Hiv/AIDS. However, thanks to skillful teachers, they were able to make up stories together through, for instance, “the sharing of news”, which I found to be a good example of scaffolding and socially interacting with each other.

In the reading circles children taught themselves to read by interacting with others. The children also shared stories while working together. Verhoeven emphasizes learning by social interaction and argues that literacy development is enhanced by such a transactional approach. It is interesting to see that social interaction was evident in all the projects I studied though not that evident at the mobile libraries.

Overall, all participants were very positive towards the projects. The Lubuto also served as a meeting place, a community-hall for kids from both the street and the Kamwala shantytown. These projects all succeeded in creating a need for reading books and in that sense also helped to promote a reading culture for the future.

I believe that the clear emphasis on shared reading and on social interaction, particularly at the Lubuto Library and the Reading Circles, should to some extent contribute to overcome the obstacles of incorporating what you read into your own cultural domain. The social interaction, manifested for example through shared reading, cleverly addresses Serpell’s concern about acquiring literacy within a culturally meaningful system. You may say that the “shared” component to some degree offset the “foreign” component.

### 9.4 Some Reflections on Literacy in a Cultural Context

I agree with Elley and Makenzi among others who argue that the tool of literacy is essential to achieve a higher standard of education, which in turn will contribute to make progress in a poor country like Zambia. Educated and trained people are needed to bring about further development in this country. To this end more knowledge about the prevention of Hiv/AIDS and other contagious diseases are necessary, to take just one example among many.

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To reach that higher general level of education in society, I believe it is important to recognise the role of literacy. This concept will then have to be understood in a broad sense, bridging oral tradition with written skills.\(^{175}\) It will have to take on board both the vernacular languages and the outreaching language of English.

Though I should add that literacy in terms of reading and writing doesn’t necessarily lead to empowerment or better life conditions.\(^{176}\) The stark reality of many students who graduated from schools is that no jobs are around, or only menial jobs which do not correspond to their education. You have acquired the tools but society still to a large extent is unable to make use of them.

On a more general note I believe that the promotion of literacy and reading in Zambia will have to continue dealing with the complexity of vernacular languages vis-à-vis English.\(^{177}\) The important reform in the late 1990’s to introduce vernacular language as the first language of instruction, provided a sound basis but did not resolve many other issues.\(^{178}\) The vernacular language helps you to master other subjects including foreign languages. Though being small languages in themselves with a fairly short history of written text materials, they will inevitably be seen as limited in reach as society develops and connects to the outside world.

It seems to be that to maintain and strengthen these languages concerted efforts are needed to elevate their standards. An obvious route is the publications of more books – textbooks and non-fiction books as well as fiction – in vernacular language. The commercial market may be limited given the high costs of printing in Zambia, which may call for the intervention of government support in this field. Broadcasting surely has its role to play, and it could engage more actively in educational/literacy related programmes targeting young people.\(^{179}\)

While education has not been the focus of my study, it is clear that the promotion of literacy would have to be addressed within the whole educational system. There is today a very strong emphasis on teacher-pupil training, leaving much aside when it comes to encouraging students to explore studies on their own. That kind of modern education, which you will find elsewhere, would have to rely on greater promotion of literacy in the broader sense.\(^{180}\)

Finally, what lies in the future? It would be interesting to study the possibility of developing literacy with help of computer technology within the context of Zambia.\(^{181}\) I know there are some programs that with the tool of computers and in at least two languages were trying to develop literacy in some schools in Zambia. At the same time you might gain some computer literacy.

\(^{175}\) Knuth 1998.
\(^{176}\) Street 2001.
\(^{177}\) Kashoki 1990.
\(^{178}\) Sampa 2006.
\(^{179}\) Informant 6 January 2009.
It would also be interesting to follow the development of question of language and literacy in Zambia. Will vernacular languages take a stronger part of education in the future and what consequences will it have for the development of literacy and for academic results in general.

10. SUMMARY

The aim of this Master thesis is to investigate how three different reading projects are contributing to the promotion of reading among school children in Zambia. I relate these findings together with some general observations of the Zambian literacy situation to a theoretical framework in order to see what lessons can be drawn. The overall purpose with this aim is to contribute to the discussion on how literacy relates to your own culture.

I am especially looking into what challenges the children and adults have confronted in terms of reading and reading promotion. I rely on what opinions there are among the participants towards these projects and to solicit their views towards reading. I am also investigating what kind of books the participating children read.

The three projects I have identified for my field study are Mobile Libraries and Reading Circles, both are organised and run by Forum for Women Educationalist in Zambia. The third one is Lubuto Library Project, run by volunteers and attached to a foundation called Fountain of Hope. The mobile library takes the form of a book van which moves around to high schools in Lusaka lending books to students. The reading circles are after school activities. The Lubuto Project is a library open to street kids and other children living under vulnerable circumstances.

As for my field study, I rely on a qualitative method which focuses on understanding the social realities based on how participants are interpreting the social context in which they are present. I am using semi structured interviews as my main method in my contacts with teachers, students and representatives involved with the three reading projects.

As for my general observations, I have looked into the diverse language situation in Zambia. I have in particular studied the role of the English language, being a second language to many while at the same time a language for social advancement. I briefly describe the educational system and how educational policy is dealing with the question of language of instructions. I also give an overview of the situation for libraries in Zambia.

In my analysis of the results, I use a theoretical framework that relates literacy to a cultural meaning system and the importance of social interaction for developing reading. I also include in this framework the difference between an experienced and an instrumental view on reading. This framework provides me with different factors essential to promote reading and literacy.
I primarily rely on Professor Robert Serpell’s studies on a cultural meaning system, and on Professor Ludo Verhoeven on the issue of social interaction for developing reading. As for a discussion on the difference between experimental and instrumental reading, I use Lecturer Sten Furhammar’s findings.

My study shows that the three projects have similar goals though with some different variations. The emphasis is on promoting a reading culture and improving reading skills. I found that the projects were struggling to achieve their goals often under very difficult circumstances and within an environment which sometimes was not supportive. On the surface, there are many practical problems to deal with on a day to day basis. The resources both in terms of money and in books and reading materials are generally scarce. The projects are struggling with organizational issues such as dependence on a few committed people, reliance on other bodies for administration and funding.

Though little statistical data are available to substantiate progress generated by these projects, I conclude on the basis of assessments and opinions expressed that the projects generally are perceived as being successful. It is evident to me that these projects are appreciated by the students and children as well as by the teachers. The coordinators and teachers demonstrate a clear sense of wanting to project a reading culture to the participants. While struggling with limited resources, they make use of their own knowledge and skills in addressing large groups of participants. The projects provide opportunities to build on self esteem, interaction with others, leadership training and new knowledge.

The mobile libraries and the Lubuto Project are able to offer a wide range of reading materials. The students make use of the mobile library generally opted for textbooks at the exclusion of non fiction books. The Reading circles compensate the lack of books with other activities which combined oral tradition with written text.

Both the Reading circles and the Lubuto Project are through the skills of teachers able to build on social interaction as a means to promote reading. The Lubuto Project involves activities and demonstrates an approach which seemed to recognise the importance of relating literacy to a cultural meaning system.

The projects I have studied hence attempted in varying ways and degrees to relate literacy to social interaction and to place literacy within the children’s own life experiences and history.

I also conclude that the projects are confronted with other less visible challenges than the lack of resources. While education is highly regarded in Zambia, it also appears that literacy is understood in a fairly narrow and instrumental way. The promotion of reading has an emphasis on textbooks and on achieving school results, with a prospect of moving upwards on the “social ladder”. Efforts to promote reading within a cultural meaning system has to be done within an environment, which appears to demonstrate at best a mixed understanding towards allowing the individual to relate reading to his or her cultural origins.
On a more general note I also conclude that the promotion of literacy and reading in Zambia has to continue dealing with the complexity of vernacular languages vis-à-vis English. The vernacular language helps you to master other subjects including foreign languages, which in turn connects you to the outside world.
Unpublished Sources

Interviews

Mobile libraries
Two interviews were conducted with adults running the Mobile libraries at FAWEZA 2007-02-01 and 2008-03-13

Two interviews were conducted with teachers coordinating the visits from Mobile libraries at two high schools, 2008-03-28 and 2008-05-06, 2008-06-04

Four interviews were conducted with pupils at two high schools participating in the Mobile library programme, 2008-03-28 and 2008-05-06.

Reading Circles
Three interviews with the coordinating teachers at three schools participating in the reading circles, 2008-02-08, 2008-05-15 and 2008-05-22
13 interviews with children participating in the reading circles at three schools, 2008-02-08, 2008-05-15 and 2008-05-22 I used 8 of those in the results.

Lubuto library
Three interviews with librarians working with The Lubuto library, 2008-01-30, 2008-06-04 and 2008-11-03
Four interviews with children using the Lubuto library 2008-06-04.
One interview with a storyteller at Lubuto 2008-03-15.
One interview with a librarian student.

Nine interviews to get background information for my study were performed between September 2007 and January 2009 addressed as informants 1-9. An Interview guide was used similar to appendix 2 but instead of questions about the projects I asked about the informants' specific area of knowledge and interests.

Observations

Two participating observations at the mobile library 2008-02-04 and 2008-03-03.
Published Sources

http://web.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum2/afrstory.htm (2007-09-10)


APPENDIX 1

Interview questions to the participating children

What do you think about this project?

Why is it good?
Is there something you like very much in the project? (Name was used for the project.)

What do you not like about the project?

Why?

How do you like reading?

What do you read?

Is it difficult to read?

In what languages do you read?

In what language do you prefer to read?

Which book is your favourite?

Why do you read? Is it important to read?

What have you learn from this project? (mention the name of the projects).

Do you have books at home?
What kind of books do you have at home?

Do you like telling stories? What stories do you know?

Can you tell me a story that you like?
**APPENDIX 2**

*Interview questions for adults*

Tell me about the project?

What effect do you hope it will have?

What needs do the participating children have according to reading and literacy?

Why is reading and literacy important?

How can this project contribute to reading and literacy?

How can it contribute to help the girl child succeed in school?

In what ways is this project important?

What are the children reading?

What would you say are relevant books for Zambian children?

Tell me about storytelling and oral tradition in Zambia?

What challenges or problems do you face in this project?

How would you like to develop the project?

What are your colleagues reaction and opinions to this project?

Why is reading and reading promotion important do you think?

Is there a reading culture in Zambia? Why/Why not?

What can be done in your opinion to enhance a reading culture?

How can literacy and reading be developed in Zambian schools?

What about reading in vernacular languages or in English?