Schools boosted with books

MBALE

By Joseph Wanzusi

Five primary schools in Mbale Municipality have received books worth sh65m from Book Aid International to support them in setting up mini-libraries that can help pupils improve learning through reading.

The beneficiary schools are Mbale Police (Wanyera), Zesui, Umar and Yumbe, Bujoloto and Busamaga primary schools. Each school received 1,300 books, a metallic cupboard and a plastic container.

Addressing headteachers and librarians of the beneficiary schools after a three-day training in library management at Mbale Public Library, the Mbale Municipal education officer, Boaz Kamuli, explained that academic performance of pupils in examinations is hinged on their ability to read, write and comprehend what they read.

"Every school should create space and time for reading in the library and teachers are expected to lead by example, so that they (teachers) can inspire learners to acquire knowledge and information through reading books," Kamuli said.

He, however, noted that the recent guidelines issued by the education ministry, regarding school standards seems to have overlooked the importance of having a library in a school. Kamuli said studies have shown that children who have a good reading culture perform better in examinations.

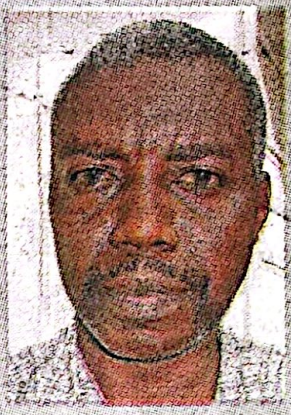
"Give reading assignments to children to take home so they can read with their parents, guardians or older siblings as one of the strategies of inspiring children to read and search for knowledge," Kamuli advised.

He cautioned headteachers against abusing the donation by locking the books in school stores or letting them disappear, thereby denying the intended beneficiaries a chance to use them profitably.

In her remarks, Jenniffer Nalwanga from National Library of Uganda, who co-ordinated the event, said the project is to inspire both teachers and learners to appreciate the importance of having a functional library in a school.

The assistant librarian of Mbale Public Library, Hellen Ossaba, who conducted the training, said teachers should read widely and become knowledgeable in order to impart skills into learners, adding that teachers must bring a world of reading into the classrooms.

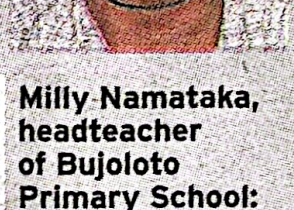
WHAT TEACHERS SAY



Paul Namawa, deputy headteacher of Mbale Police School: I am positive the books will greatly help learners improve language command and comprehension



Milly Namataka, headteacher of Bujoloto Primary School: The training of headteachers and librarians has inspired us to love libraries and get the children to start reading.



Edirisa Waisana, deputy headteacher of Umar and Yumbe Primary School: Failures in exams is attributed to poor reading culture. Schools should have a library to improve performance.



Margaret Kibone, headteacher of Zesui Primary School: The Government should train all schools and provide reading materials for children to promote a reading culture.

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