

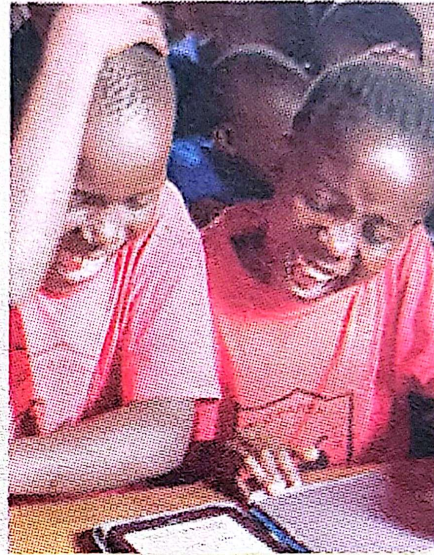
Local language books can enhance children's reading competencies

React to the story, 'Pupil's reading skills improve' in the *New Vision* of Thursday. This was attributed to the teaching and learning in local languages in lower primary classes. It is a good observation that needs to be strengthened for the benefit of our children.

The idea of teaching in local languages generally enhances children's early learning abilities. It is now evident from the report of Uganda National Examinations Board that learners in schools that use local languages easily acquire skills in letter identification, letter sounds, vocabulary, listening, comprehension and oral passage reading.

This is commendable and should be supported with provision of more local language books so that the skills are transferred to even to upper primary classes. Children love reading stories in their own languages with a focus on their immediate communities, and not about other unrelatable topics.

Children's pursuit of reading sto-



ries is developed once they are able to describe things around them. These stories are the window to their world of fantasy, reality as well as developing competencies.

Books written in local a language are often developed basing on what is found in the areas that these children are found. This is captivating, engaging and connect to their souls with the reading materials.

Children cannot learn to read effec-

tively, if there are few or no reading materials to read.

The Ministry of Education and Sports should focus more on purchase of books to support the initiative. Children learn even faster when reading materials are available.

Teaching a child in their mother tongue is very important as it gives them identity. The thematic curriculum, which stresses the lower primary teaching in local languages is good for our children.

The government of Uganda has a language policy that supports mother language instruction and learning at the early grade level. This should be supported by all stakeholders, including our development partners, to enable schools have local language reading materials.

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