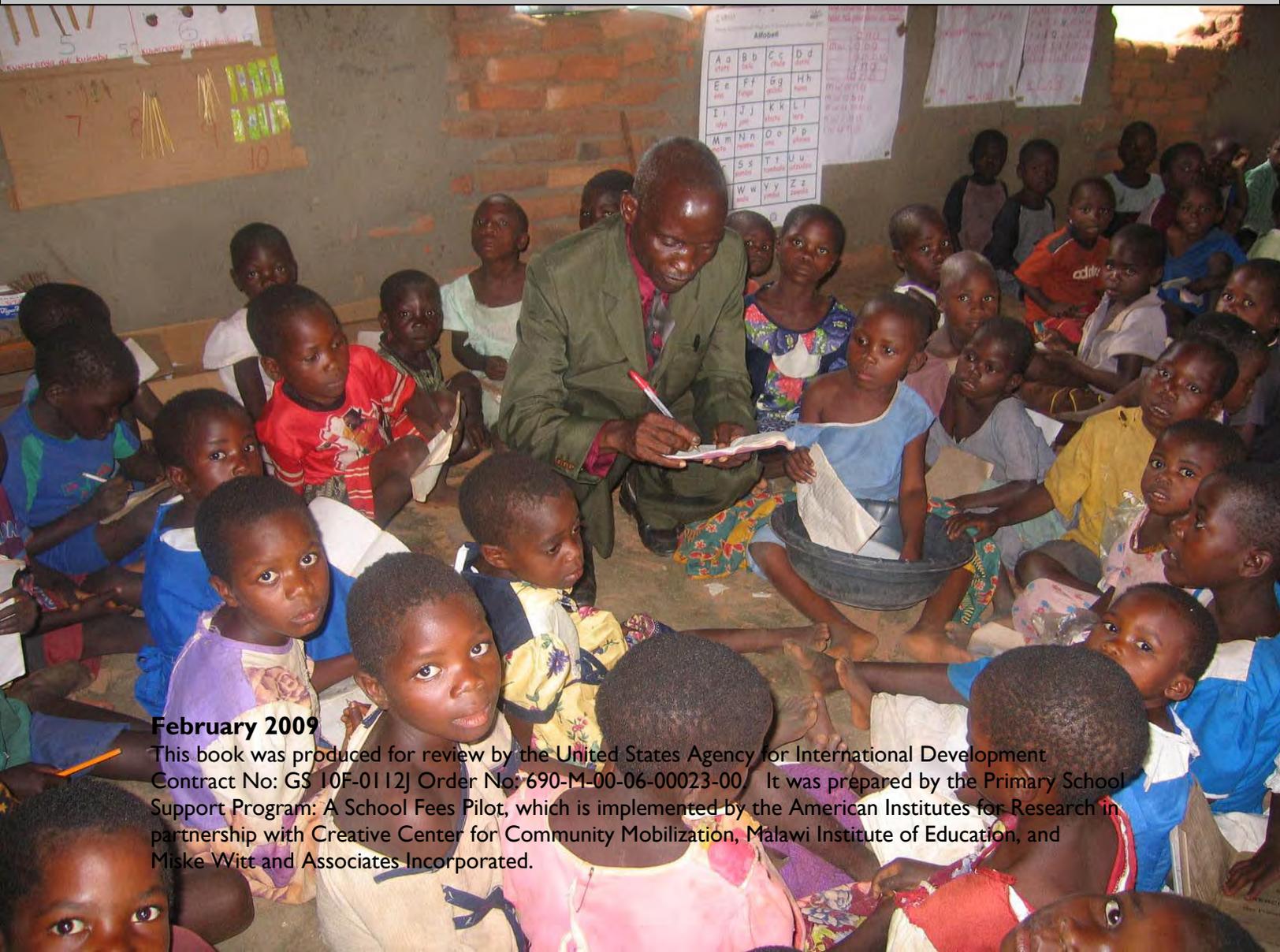


LET'S READ, MALAWI!



February 2009

This book was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development Contract No: GS 10F-0112J Order No: 690-M-00-06-00023-00. It was prepared by the Primary School Support Program: A School Fees Pilot, which is implemented by the American Institutes for Research in partnership with Creative Center for Community Mobilization, Malawi Institute of Education, and Miske Witt and Associates Incorporated.

Let's Read, Malawi!

Printed and published by

American Institutes for Research (AIR) in partnership with Creative Centre for Community Mobilization (CRECCOM), Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) and Miske Witt and Associates Incorporated (MWAI).

Primary School Support Program: A School Fees Pilot (PSSP: SFP)

PO Box 40

Mponela

Dowa

Malawi

February 2009

Printed and published with funding from United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under contact number No. GS 10F-0112J Order No. 690-M-00-06-00023-00.

PRIMARY SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAM:
A SCHOOL FEES PILOT

LET'S READ, MALAWI!

February 2009



AMERICAN
INSTITUTES
FOR RESEARCH



DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
List of Acronyms	v
Introduction to PSSP: SFP	1
Introduction to <i>Let's Read, Malawi!</i>	3
Strategy One: Reading Aloud/Shared Books	4
Strategy Two: Guest Readers/Storytellers	6
Strategy Three: Creating a Lending Library	8
Strategy Four: Literacy Fair	10
Strategy Five: After-School or Community Reading Club	12
Strategy Six: Children as Authors: Creating Books	14
Strategy Seven: Buddy Reading	16
Strategy Eight: Print-Rich Environments	18
References	21

Acknowledgements

The Primary School Support Program: A School Fees Pilot (PSSP: SFP) gratefully acknowledges the contributions made by a number of individuals and organizations in the development and production of *Let's Read, Malawi!*

The following individuals gave guidance and support: Mr. Simeon Mawindo, PSSP: SFP Chief of Party; Ms. Cassandra Jesse, PSSP: SFP Deputy Chief of Party; Mr. Odala Banda, PSSP: SFP Literacy Specialist; Dr. Shirley Miske, President, Miske Witt and Associates; Dr. Nancy Clair, Senior Literacy Specialist, Miske Witt and Associates; Ms. Sarah Koehler, Project Assistant, Miske Witt and Associates; and Ms. Jennifer Anderson, PSSP: SFP Project Manager, American Institutes for Research.

The following institutions gave technical and professional support: The Malawi Institute of Education; The Department of Education Methods and Advisory Services and The Department of Teacher Education and Development in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; The Central East Education Division Manager's Office; and The District Education Manager's Office for Dowa.

We express our appreciation for the support, encouragement, and funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission in Lilongwe, Malawi, which enabled the development and production of *Let's Read, Malawi!*

Let's Read, Malawi! is a product developed by the American Institutes for Research and its partner organization, Miske Witt and Associates, under contract number No. GS 10F-0112J Order No. 690-M-00-06-00023-00 from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

List of Acronyms

AIR	American Institutes for Research
BLP/M	Beginning Literacy Program for Malawi
CRECCOM	Creative Center for Community Mobilization
FPE	Free Primary Education
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MWAI	Miske Witt and Associates Incorporated
MCM	Mobilization Corps of Malawi
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Education
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PSSP: SFP	Primary School Support Program: A School Fees Pilot
SMC	School Management Committee
TALULAR	Teaching and Learning Using Locally Available Resources
TDC	Teacher Development Center
TLM	Teaching and Learning Material

Introduction to PSSP: SFP

The Government of Malawi is faced with declining quality of teaching and learning in its primary schools. Since it began its policy of free primary education in 1994, the government has seen enrollment skyrocket from 1.9 million to 3.2 million pupils. It has not been possible to provide enough trained teachers for the overcrowded classrooms. As a result, teachers who are not adequately qualified for their jobs now teach many pupils. Although the government has tried to provide pre-service and in-service training to teachers, the training has only met a small part of the need. This is where Primary School Support Program: A School Fees Pilot (PSSP: SFP) has helped to address the need.

PSSP: SFP, a three-year initiative funded by USAID/Malawi in collaboration with the Malawi Government, targeted all of the 226 public primary schools in Dowa district. American Institutes for Research (AIR), in its lead role, implemented PSSP: SFP in response to the need to improve the quality of education and serve as a pilot under a US Congressional mandate to develop strategies to reduce the cost of schooling that still hinders access, especially for the most vulnerable children. PSSP: SFP was jointly implemented by AIR with Creative Center for Community Mobilization (CRECCOM), Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), and Miske Witt and Associates Incorporated (MVAI).

The core goal of PSSP: SFP was to achieve equitable access to quality basic education. To reach this goal, the project had the following objectives:

- To increase access to basic education and improve learning with special focus on orphans, vulnerable children, girls and children with special needs.
- To increase resources at the school level.
- To improve teaching and learning outcomes in schools in Dowa.

PSSP: SFP took a holistic approach to achieving this goal. It worked to improve the professional development of teachers as well as mobilize communities to become owners of the schools. One specific focus of PSSP: SFP was promoting literacy, stemming from the understanding that literacy is the foundation of learning. With this in mind, PSSP: SFP developed the Beginning Literacy Program for Malawi (BLP/M) that targets Standard I children. BLP/M is a thematically-based literacy course filled with Chichewa songs and stories for Standard I learners. It focuses primarily on children's acquisition of basic literacy skills through reading and writing in Chichewa, the mother tongue of Dowa's children. The outcomes include enabling learners to read short familiar messages with fluency; to write simple sentences and stories; and to love reading and writing.

In addition, PSSP: SFP launched a literacy campaign that incorporated a number of literacy-based activities to promote reading among pupils. Teachers were trained in literacy strategies and participatory methods to support literacy development. Many schools developed literacy centers like reading corners or libraries with specific reading times scheduled for different classes. The Mobilization Corps of Malawi (MCM) helped establish reading clubs. PSSP: SFP encouraged community members and learners from upper classes to collect songs, write stories, and paste them on notice boards. Community members now serve as storytellers and historians in schools, promoting interest in listening to stories and in writing them. The community has also contributed to the development of TALULAR (Teaching and Learning Using Locally Available Resources) for literacy lessons. Open days and literacy fairs at school helped the parents and communities appreciate teachers' efforts and garner parents' continued support for education.

PSSP: SFP's literacy strategies and holistic approach to improving quality of education has translated to improved outcomes for learners. Learners are returning to school and are staying in school – 26% more learners are in school since the project started, the largest increase in enrollment since Free Primary Education was declared in 1994. The last three years have seen a 43% improvement in pupil attendance in Dowa. Dowa's learners are also achieving. Scores on a range of assessments show an increase between 28% and 39% on pupil performance. After years near the bottom of most quality measures, Dowa District has risen to place second in the nation, surpassed only by Blantyre Urban in Standard 8 pass rates and selection to secondary school. This is the clearest testament to the efforts of PSSP: SFP and the achievements of the people of Dowa in their pursuit of equitable access to quality primary education.

Indeed, the district should be proud of its progress. Teachers have taken responsibility for their classes, with 71% of them using participatory methods, up from 30% when the project started. Inside the classrooms there are resources – posters and books for learners, reference materials for teachers, and lending libraries for the benefit of learners, teachers, and the school community. With the implementation of BLP/M, Standard I learners can read and write and have developed the joy of reading.

In addition to improved learner performance, school infrastructure has been transformed, with dramatic increases in new or refurbished facilities at all 226 schools. Communities are finding creative ways to support learners who are most disadvantaged. Three-fourths of the communities have undertaken income generating activities to support their learners. Word is spreading through media and newsletters that PSSP: SFP has helped Dowa raise quality, access, and equity in education. Now that PSSP: SFP has come to its end, the baton has been passed to the people of Dowa. With new knowledge, skills, and resources from PSSP: SFP, expectations are high that pupils in Dowa will continue to progress. *Let's Read, Malawi!* was written to help support continued literacy development throughout Dowa District.

Introduction to *Let's Read, Malawi!*

When you open a book, or tell a story, you open the world!

Reading with children is an excellent way to help them think and wonder about the world around them. By reading with children you help them do better in school. But best of all, you enjoy time together.

Let's Read, Malawi! provides simple step-by-step instructions for family members, teachers, librarians and other adults who want to foster a love of reading and writing in children. The eight literacy activities in *Let's Read, Malawi!* were selected because they are grounded in best literacy practices. Each activity includes: the purpose, materials, steps, modifications and extensions, and an impact story from Dowa District.

The eight literacy activities can take place at the Teacher Development Centers (TDC), at school, in the community or at home. The purpose is to create a love of reading and to promote a culture of reading and lifelong learners! But most important is to HAVE FUN!!

Strategy One: Reading Aloud/Shared Books

Purpose: This strategy requires that the teacher, community member or family member read aloud to children, ask questions about the story, and invite children to respond. This interactive activity models fluent reading for children and allows children to interact with stories that they could not read on their own. It fosters comprehension and critical thinking, and motivates children to read on their own.

Materials: Story Books of high interest for children, BLP/M Big Books

Steps:

1. Find a variety of books that children will understand and enjoy.
2. Practice reading the book **before** you read it to children. This allows you to identify aspects of the story you want to stress and the types of questions you want to ask.
3. Create a relaxed atmosphere for reading aloud. Make sure that children are seated around you and that they are comfortable.
4. Tell children that you are going to read them a story. Say, "I am going to read you a story from this beautiful book."
5. Display the cover of the book. Ask children to look at the cover. Point to some of the illustrations on the cover and ask children what they see. Say, "What do you see?" Allow a few children to respond. Do not speak negatively of any child's ideas.
6. Read aloud the title of the story. Say, "The title of this story is _____."
7. Ask children what they think the story is about. Say, "Look at the picture on the cover and tell what will happen in the story." Allow children to respond.
8. Read aloud each page with expression displaying the illustrations.
9. Pause after one or two pages and ask children comprehension questions, such as:
 - What do you think will happen next? Why do you think that?
 - What would you do in a similar situation? Why?
10. When you finish the story, lead a discussion about what you have read. Here are some questions:
 - Was anything interesting (funny, sad, or scary) in the story? What was it? Why?
 - Has anything like this ever happened to you? Please tell us.
 - If you could change a part of the story, what would it be? Why?
 - If you were one of the characters, how would you feel? Why?
 - What was the best part of the story? Why?
11. Remember, all children's responses are good responses. Encourage all children to participate!

Modifications or Extensions: After reading the story, children could draw pictures of their favourite part of the story, retell the story in their own words, or role play parts of the story.

Impact Story

After PSSP: SFP trained Mrs. Gertrude Chinkhombe, a Standard I teacher from Mbira School, Mvera Zone, in literacy strategies in line with its newly launched literacy program, Beginning Literacy Program for Malawi (BLP/M), Mrs. Chinkhombe embraced the Teacher Read-Aloud strategy. She testifies how it has improved the critical thinking in her young learners. She uses this strategy not only in Chichewa or English classes, but in all subjects.

Another teacher in Dowa, Mrs. Eunice Kamzenga of Mndunje School in Chibwata would read aloud to her learners from BLP/M Big Books developed by PSSP: SFP, pausing at each page to discuss illustrations and make hypotheses about what they think they will hear next. The learners found this exciting as they were able to connect their home to what they read, and get excited by reading familiar words like “nyama” (meat), which they recognize from their dinner.

Mr. Amigo Wisman of Kampenga School similarly applies the technique. The district recognized him as a role model, and he was asked to be a trainer of trainers in this strategy.



Strategy Two: Guest Readers/Storytellers

Purpose: Guest readers or storytellers frequently renew interest in reading by visiting classrooms, libraries, reading clubs, and sharing stories about the school, home, or community with children. Guest readers can bring new ideas, share stories from village life or culture, and inspire children in any number of topics.

Materials: Stories, books of high interest.

Steps or Tips to Consider for Guest Readers/Storytellers:

1. Locate someone in the community whom the children respect or look up to.
2. Discuss the story or book that the guest reader will tell or read, **before** presenting to children. Clarify the time, place, and duration of the guest reader's activities.

For the Guest Reader/Storyteller:

3. Choose a story of high interest for children. Make sure it can be told or read in one sitting. Practice telling or reading the story **before** you present it to children.
4. Set the stage by asking a few questions that will engage the children in what they will hear. It could be a question based on the title (if you are reading a book), or a prop, a costume, or other artifact that relates to the story.
5. Read or tell your story with much expression and theatrics.
6. Tell or read the story for no longer than 20 minutes for younger children.
7. Do not rush the story. Stop to ask questions or get children's comments.
8. Use props, costumes, music to make the story come alive.
9. After the story is complete, ask children some questions that might include:
 - Was anything interesting (funny, sad, or scary) in the story? What was it? Why?
 - Has anything like this ever happened to you? Please tell us.
 - If you could change a part of the story, what would it be? Why?
 - If you were one of the characters, how would you feel? Why?
 - What was the best part of the story? Why?
10. Remember, all children's responses are valuable. Encourage all children to participate.
11. Children need closure. Make sure there is plenty of time to finish the story.

Modifications or Extensions: After reading or hearing the story, children could draw pictures of their favourite part of the story, retell the story in their own words, or role play parts of the story.

Impact Story

Local resource persons can be powerful educators, as Village Headman Kokokolo from the Lufe School community has proven. VH Kokokolo and other community members lamented about how the youth of today were less interested in remaining in the community and becoming future leaders in the village. He feared a loss of culture and values and wanted to see that restored. After sensitization from PSSP: SFP, VH Kokokolo recognized he had a role to play to improve the quality of education. He observed that the Lufe School was understaffed and learners were often roaming the school ground, rather than attending class. VH Kokokolo approached the head teacher about returning to the days of storytelling. The idea was readily accepted, so VH Kokokolo and other parents now come regularly to share proverbs that tell about characters and stories that reveal the community's history, and that bring to life many topics covering Malawi and African history. As a result of storytelling, learners are showing greater respect for and more interest in school.



Strategy Three: Creating a Lending Library

Purpose: A lending library is a wonderful way to make books accessible to children and their families. A lending library can become a center of activity within the school or community.

Materials: Books, and a place to keep them.

Questions and Responses for Creating a Library:

(adapted: RIF Parent Guide Brochure www.rif.org)

1. What is involved?

A good library requires time, space, and support: time to collect and take care of the materials; a place to keep and enjoy the books; and community support. If possible, visit other libraries and talk with those who have experience creating and maintaining libraries.

2. Where is the best place to set up the library?

Talk with community elders or with the local SMC or PTA about the best place to put the library. Also talk with them about ways that they will support this effort.

3. How large should the library be?

It is variety that counts, not size. Focus on the types of books that will be of interest to children and other readers as opposed to the number of books. A small collection of books thoughtfully gathered over time is better than a larger collection that is not used. Asking the children themselves about topics of interest is a good place to start in collecting books.

4. How should we display and protect our books?

Shelves work best, and books can be displayed by topic or by age (e.g., a variety of topics that are appropriate for 6-9 year olds). Make sure that materials for the youngest readers are on the bottom shelves. Books may need to be stored in locked cabinets overnight.

5. What kinds of reading materials should we include?

Include just about anything: paperback and hardback books, newspapers, magazines, children-made books. Make sure there are selections for every age, reading level, and interest. Constantly ask children, family and community members, and teachers for suggestions.

6. Where do we get reading materials?

Books frequently come from the communities themselves. Ask community members to donate books. The following organizations may give books or provide support: International Book Bank, The National Library, and other donor organizations.

Impact Story

When PSSP: SFP started in Dowa in 2006, there were only 10 school accessible libraries. By the end of 2008, there were 185 school libraries and 19 TDC libraries, also open to schools. This astounding increase came from PSSP: SFP efforts to foster a reading culture. PSSP: SFP sought a donation from the International Book Bank, which shipped approximately 42,000 books. Using these as a carrot, PSSP: SFP distributed these books to schools that were working to establish libraries following district-wide sensitization meetings. Teachers were trained how to establish libraries, and communities were provided with small grants that were often used to improve school infrastructure, including libraries. The National Library recognized the transformation and trained eight teachers from Dowa in library services. PSSP: SFP supported the training of an additional 20 teachers. More books came to the zone from the National Library and from well-wishers.

In addition, communities began to contribute materials and books they had at home. Libraries have become a hub of activity and learning. For example, Mr. Siliya, the teacher librarian for Kayembe School, encouraged study circles for teachers who wished to upgrade their academic standing. His and others' efforts have paid dividends: 25% more teachers now hold the MSCE (Malawi School Certificate of Education) since PSSP: SFP started. Elsewhere, like Chigudu School, library times are well structured, with library time incorporated into the school day and after hours. Academic clubs are flourishing and Dowa is becoming the shining star for a reinvigorated reading culture.



Strategy Four: Literacy Fair

Purpose: The purpose of a Literacy Fair is to provide an opportunity for children, parents, teachers, village elders, and community members to celebrate literacy together. This is an excellent chance to strengthen school-community partnerships, since families and communities are invited into the school to see pupils display pictures and class books, and to hear pupils sing songs and read aloud their favourite stories

Materials: Books, displays of children's writing, drawing, etc.

Steps: *for teachers or librarians*

1. Meet with PTA or SMC members and plan a date for the Literacy Fair. Ask community members if they would like to help. For example, they may help clean the venue of the Literacy Fair, donate refreshments, etc.
2. Invite families and communities members to the Literacy Fair. Be sure to include the time, date, and purpose of the Literacy Fair in the invitation.
3. Select the stories or songs that pupils will perform during the Literacy Fair. Practice the stories or songs with pupils.
4. Select pupils' stories, class-made books, or drawings to display during the Literacy Fair.
5. Make sure the classroom or library is clean and inviting to guests.
6. Greet the guests.
7. Have a great time!!

Modifications or Extensions: Children can play a role in planning and organizing the Literacy Fair. They can write invitation letters to the Literacy Fair (see BLP/M lesson plans in Units 7, 14, and 21 for step-by-step instructions on how to get pupils involved). You may use the time after the Literacy Fair to hold a community meeting.

Impact Story

Literacy Fairs and Open Days have helped promote effective school-community partnerships in Dowa's schools. Tchawale School in Chimungu Zone provides an excellent example. As part of the BLP/M, parents and community members were invited to see demonstrations from the Standard I learners at the end of each term. Some learners read from Big Books or song posters, others showed Big Books they had created. Teachers asked parents to express their pride to children. When a child would successfully read from a word card or sing, that child's parent exclaimed in disbelief that the child was performing so well, and committed to continuing to support the child's education. In some cases, the teachers would even spur the parent to kill a chicken for dinner in honor of their child's success. Following the Literacy Fair, parents were more supportive in assisting their children with homework, staying after school hours to do extra studying in the library, and even providing materials they had at home to create a richer print environment at the school.



Strategy Five: After-School or Community Reading Club

Purpose: Reading Clubs provide an opportunity for pupils to read books, do homework, or play learning games after school. After-School Reading Clubs allow pupils from different age groups to work, read, and play together.

Materials: Books (chapter books, short stories, picture books, textbooks, etc.), teaching and learning materials (TLMs).

Steps:

1. Meet with PTA, SMC, or MCM members and discuss plans for an After-School Reading Club. Ask these members if they would like to help. For example, they could volunteer to facilitate the club, or they could provide a stipend, food, or a clean place to hold the activity.
2. Decide when to have the After-School Reading Club, for example, the first Monday of every month or every Wednesday. Decide the hours as well.
3. Provide books and TLMs for children. Talk with head teachers or teachers to see if you can borrow these materials from the school or see if the community will donate materials from their homes.
4. During reading club activities, encourage pupils to read with each other. The Reading Club activities should be fun and encourage pupils to learn.

Modifications or Extensions: Many different learning activities are appropriate for After-School Reading Clubs. Pupils can read books together or independently. They can do homework, play learning games, or listen to stories read aloud. Reading Club activities may or may not be structured. Most important, Reading Club activities should encourage children and should be fun!!

Impact Story

Reading Clubs in Dowa were often facilitated by a Mobilization Corps of Malawi (MCM) member, or a youth volunteer from the community that PSSP: SFP trained to support education. In Chimungu, Masauli Mbnekera spearheaded a model reading club after seeing many learners struggle to comprehend text from that day's lesson. After school, he asked struggling learners to bring their textbooks. Groups would read from their books and answer comprehension questions. During open reading hours, Masauli would let learners choose books to read on their own. At the end of the reading hour, Mr. Mbnekera would have them write a few sentences about what they read and how they felt about it.

Chikonde Mbwewe, MCM Madisi, took his reading club to a new level. Together with Mr. Duncans from Mtanila School, he launched a quiz club as part of the reading club. Teachers developed questions from different subjects for what were initially inter-class quiz competitions. As the learners' interest grew, they spent more time reading in the library, increasing their confidence and expanding their knowledge. They soon asked to take the quiz competitions to other schools as they enjoyed competing with pupils from neighboring schools. They soon went as far as Mponela and Kanyenje to challenge pupils there, becoming the top quiz team in the district. Reading Clubs clearly have shown they can foster a diversified reading culture.



Strategy Six: Children as Authors: Creating Books

Purpose: Children writing stories and creating books is a wonderful way for children to practice many literacy skills. In addition, creating books is fun and motivates children to read and write more. Children love to see their ideas and drawings made into a book. When books reflect children's own experiences and ideas, children discover that writing is one way they can express themselves.

Materials: Paper, pens, crayons, string, card board.

Steps:

1. Tell children that they are going to create a book. Display some children-made books if you have them. Point to the title of the book and the author.
2. Children can make books about themes, books that are a response to a story or song, or to an experience such as visiting a farm. They can make an individual or group book.
3. Select a topic for the class-made book, for example, "my family."
4. Ask children what the title of the book should be. Say, "What is the title of our book?" Allow a few children to respond. The response should be about the topic or experience that the children will write or draw about. Write the title on the chalkboard.
5. Ask pupils who the author of the book is. Say, "Who is the author of the book?" Children's responses should be: "our class," "our group," "us." Write the author's name on the chalkboard.

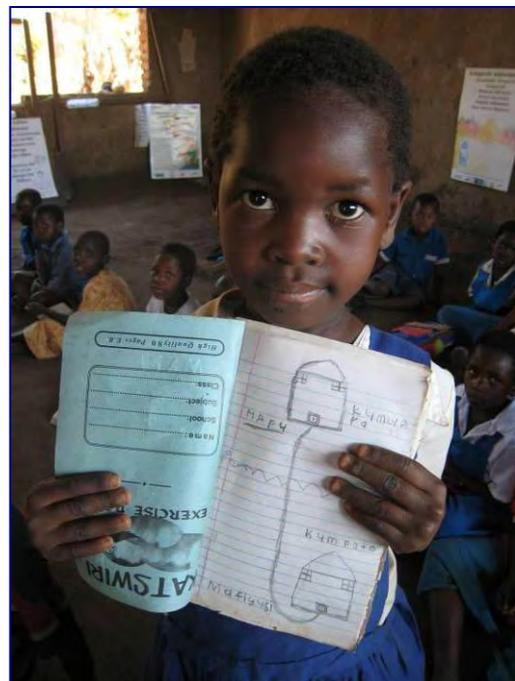
My Family
By (names of children)

6. Put pupils in groups of six or seven. Give each child a piece of paper (except one child who should get a piece of cardboard the same size as the paper). Tell children to write their names on the top right-hand corner of the paper.
7. Tell children to draw a picture or write a sentence that depicts the title of the book or topic.
8. Assign the cover of the book to one child in the group. Tell that child to draw the cover of the book on the piece of cardboard. Tell him or her to write the title and the names of the authors on the cover.
9. As children are working, move around the room and assist where necessary.
10. When children finish their drawings, fasten them together in book form. Make sure you fasten the cover as the first page. Add another piece of cardboard as the last page to support the book.
11. Have each group display their book, demonstrating how to hold the book properly.
12. Let children read each other's books.
13. Praise children for their wonderful work creating books together.

Modifications or Extensions: For examples of class-made Big Books for different themes and topics, see Lesson Plans in Beginning Literacy Program (BLP/M) that include making class books. Children can make vocabulary books or other books that they will read together.

Impact Story

Mr. Macdonald Makamula is a dedicated month-to-month teacher from Kapbulungo School who has taken with vigor the lessons from BLP/M training. The BLP/M has many lessons where children are writing their own stories and making books. Mr. Makamula recalled the days of decades past when this was practiced regularly in Malawi's schools. He shared with learners the importance of books, how books got created, and what it meant to be an author. Mr. Malamula gave learners a topic, like your home or your school, from BLP/M lessons. Pupils drew pictures, labeled the drawings or wrote sentences about people and actions. Other times, Mr. Malamula let learners choose the story line and creativity flourished. Learners' imaginations grew and they began appreciating their own creativity and that of their peers. Pupils would frequently read the stories they had written to classmates with pride.



Strategy Seven: Buddy Reading

Purpose: Buddy Reading pairs two readers with one book. One reader is usually a better reader than the other. The pair chooses a book together to ensure that both are interested in the topic. The readers take turns reading aloud to each other. When one child is reading, the other follows along.

Materials: A variety of books (chapter, story or picture) for children to select.

Steps:

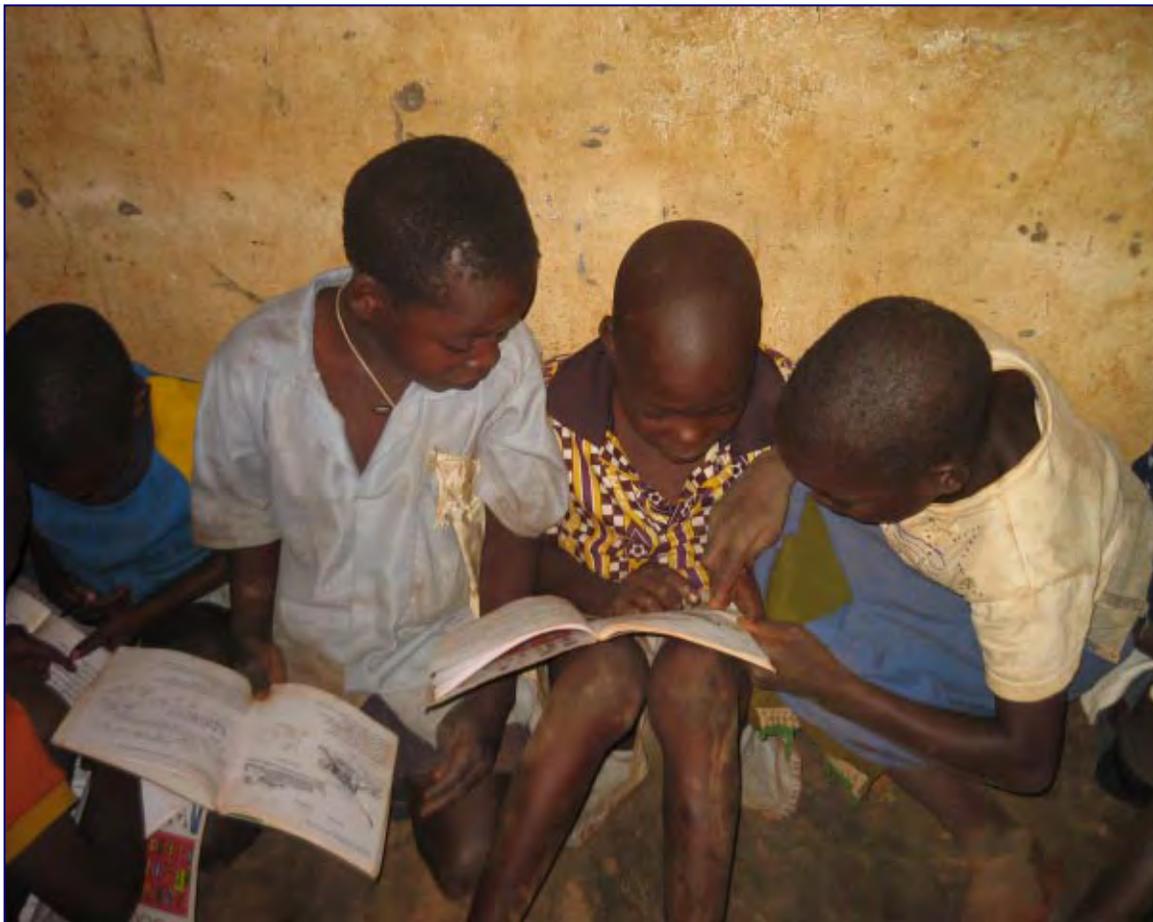
1. Tell children that they are going to read aloud to each other in pairs
2. Put children in pairs. You may want to pair better readers with less skilled readers, or younger readers with older readers.
3. Tell the pairs to select a book together. Tell children to select a book that is of interest to the person they are reading with.
4. Tell children they have 30 minutes to read together. Tell children to take turns reading aloud to each other. You may want to demonstrate this to the children first.
5. When children are finished reading to each other, you can ask the children one or more of the following:
 - Retell the story in your own words.
 - What was your most favourite or least favourite part of the story? Why?
 - Would you recommend this story to others? Why?
6. Remember, all children's responses are valuable. Encourage all children to participate.

Modifications or Extensions: Pair older readers with younger readers. Books can include story books, chapter books, text books, or picture books. Children can create books (see the previous strategy) from the story that they have read together.

Impact Story

Buddy Reading provides remediation and enrichment for both readers, as Mr. Raymond Kaponya, a Standard I teacher from Chandawe School, Kabwinja Zone testifies. Mr. Kaponya uses group or pair leaders to help learners with understanding the story and has the leader facilitate discussions on the meaning of the story. This not only provides remediation to the slower learners, but reinforces the knowledge of the group leader as well.

At the Mphimbi School in Mponela Zone, teachers established peer tutoring after realizing some learners needed more assistance. This also helped with large classes, where teachers were too few against the number of learners. The school aligned the reading periods for a lower standard class and an upper standard class so that the upper class could work with the lower class. Learners who were excelling in reading were paired up with learners in the lower class to provide remediation and serve as role models. Learners in the upper class who needed support stayed with their class teacher for their reading lesson. As the success of this strategy became clear, Mphimbi School started after-school sessions. This has encouraged learners to come to school and stay in school, providing opportunity for a brighter future.



Strategy Eight: Print-Rich Environments

Purpose: Print-rich environments in the home, school, or library demonstrate to children that reading and writing are aspects of everyday life. Displays of pictures, writing, and drawings are stimulating for children. One way to create print-rich environments is to collect not only children's work, but print that is in the environment, such as labels, signs and advertisements that are part of day-to-day life.

Materials: Labels, signs, children's writing and drawing, alphabet charts, etc.

Steps:

1. Collect everyday examples of print: logos, labels, signs, labels, word lists, etc.
2. Display the collection on bulletin boards, clothes lines, walls of the library or classroom

Modifications or Extensions: Ask children to help collect every-day examples of print from their homes. Create a thematic word and picture wall. For example, if the theme is "My Family", the word wall should contain the following words: mother, father, sister, brother, etc., and it should include pictures and stories about family members.

Impact Story

TALULAR – Teaching and Learning Using Locally Available Resources has taken root in Dowa, with two teachers standing out above the rest. Inspired by PSSP: SFP trainings, Mr. Fredrick Nkulenga of Lufe School in Mvera Zone and Mr. Venice Mtonya of Kapatalambwe School in Senga Zone have not let the lack of government-provided resources stop their classrooms from becoming a center for print-rich environments. Before PSSP: SFP they were struggling to reach all learners in large classes. They realized that TALULAR would simplify concepts and would improve instruction even for the learners in the “back of the class.”

In the classrooms where TALULAR is used, one’s eye does not rest, rather it is stimulated by the range of materials meant to promote learning. Both teachers will provide quick refreshers by asking their Standard I learners to find a certain letter on the wall then read that word to his or her classmates. Learners frequently come into the class during break or after class to read from the walls

While some teachers complain that it is too time-consuming to make their own materials, both Mr. Nkulenga and Mr. Mtonya demonstrated the contrary. Using MCM volunteers, they actually created a TALULAR bank where the entire school could draw classroom resources for a specified lesson. Parents were tapped to bring in print resources. By engaging parents, chances of vandalism were essentially eliminated since they were now owners of these resources.



References

- Burns, S.M., Griffen, P. and Snow, C.E. (1999). *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- Clair, N., Banda, O., Lemani, E., and Sharra, S. (2007). *Beginning Literacy Program for Malawi in Chichewa: Teacher's Guide*. Mponela, Malawi, PSSP: SFP: USAID
- Ezekiel K. (2006). *Participatory Teaching and Learning Methods: A Guide to Methods and Techniques*. Malawi Education Support Activity (MESA) and reprinted by PSSP: SFP/USAID. Mponela: Malawi.
- Janigan, K, et. al. (2006) *Teaching English in Malawian Primary Schools: Reading and Writing*. Malawi Teacher Training Activity (MTTA). Malawi Institute for Education. Domasi: Malawi.
- Malawi Institute of Education. (2007a). *Effective Use and Care of Textbooks*. Adapted by Malawi Education Support Activity (MESA) and reprinted by PSSP: SFP/USAID. Mponela: Malawi.
- Malawi Institute of Education. (2007b). *Resource Centre Guide*. Adapted by Malawi Education Support Activity (MESA) and reprinted by PSSP: SFP/USAID.
- Malawi Institute of Education. (2006). *TALULAR: A User's Guide*. Domasi: Malawi.



AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH
1000 Thomas Jefferson St. NW
Washington, DC 20007
(202) 403-5000
www.air.org