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### **Building family literacy skills among parents and children in developing countries: a case for Uganda**

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#### **Abstract**

*Literacy is very important to the prosperity of any country. The family literacy builds skills in parents and children in accessing and using information and books for national development. A qualitative study conducted in Uganda among the randomly selected families identifies no strategy to enhance family literacy in families. To develop family literacy, it requires strategies that enable parents and children to learn and read together. The paper suggests family literacy strategies to increase access of information and books for parents and children towards a literate and informed society.*

#### **1. Introduction**

*["Truth, Wisdom, Learning and good Sense—These are worth paying for, but too valuable to you to sell...Homes [families] are built on the foundation of wisdom and understanding" (Proverbs 23:23—24:9)]*

Most of the things a modern human being enjoys in his or her every day life has been invented or discovered through trials and errors by his ancestor. Literacy too has developed from the medieval writings of Hieroglyphics by Egyptians that used papyrus sheets, and the

Cuneiform by the Babylonians characterised by writings on clay tablets. The writing of the Bible, and later the introduction of Sunday Schools was meant to teach how to read, which is very important in the history of education in the world. A right to education implies a right to access to information. To utilise information, societies need to be literate about their needs. The definition of literacy has evolved from the ability to read and write to the expanded and more elaborate ability to address the practices and outcomes of education in the information age (Barton, 2004:2). Being literate in this sense, according to Stanley as referred to by Hillerich (1993:10) is the minimum capacity both to understand the moral implications of and to act upon the demands of competence of what a particular society defines as responsible participation of a person [in a] society. Actually Riberio (2001:33) believes that literacy by itself cannot provide attitudes towards information utilisation. That is one reason why Barton (2004:2) associates literacy to a particular process by which available information [content of knowledge] can be more easily understood by a particular society—thus referring to issues like reading literacy, cultural literacy, and computer literacy, [and *family literacy*].

To develop any literacy, information literacy is required as a tool of empowering individuals and societies to develop the abilities of learning how to learn. Information literacy is an understanding and set of abilities enabling individuals to recognise when information is needed and the capacity to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information (Council for Australian University Librarians 2001:1). Learning how to learn requires a literate person to have the ability to recognise a need for, locate, access, evaluate the quality of, organise, and use the information effectively (Barton, 2004:2). That is why Meyers and Jeeves ([*Sa*]:36) ask –while referring to Proverbs 22:6 that says ‘train up a child in the way he should grow, and when he is old he will not depart from it’ – how much credit (and blame) parents deserve for their children’s future. They feel that how one trains up a child affects how the child behaves within the environment as they quote a developmental psychologist Sandra Scarr who put it shockingly that ‘...there is virtually no family environment effect on personality...in any reasonable environment, people will become what they will become’. That is why it is important to develop family strategies by which parents and children can learn and read together for life long literacy.

## **2. Libraries and Readership Development**

Libraries play a role in the development of family literacy. Libraries encourage children and parents to have a love for books, to have a love for literature and to want to read and practise the reading skills. For example, learning extracting information from a book will help a child whether a book is physics, grammar or cooking (Hassett, 1981:36). However, readership development is effective if there are strategies for early interaction of parents with children, because children need modelling ‘we clap when others clap, ...and copy the style and verbal expressions of our peers’ (Hassett 1981:40). It is important to create approaches, which challenge children and through which children experience success, valuing the achievements of each child in integrating the use of and reading books e.g. using songs, plays, discussions, learning new procedures, and test demonstrations through videos, visit to libraries and museums. Applying Socratic [Socrates was the first Athenian school teacher to engage his students through the use of dialogue] method of teaching, Aristotle taught Alexander and other companions to look for facts and patterns among a variety of sources and integrate them in a systematic and insightful manner that was useful for solving specific problems they were grappling with (Bose 2003:41). Involving children in expanded family talks; visiting what is worth visiting, homework discussion, and exclusive stories from family meetings (Magara 2002:2) help children in building facts and patterns for their future use. Actually having been

inspired by Aristotle's teachings and personally developed a deep interest in reading, Alexander built Alexandria as a centre of art, culture and education (Bose 2003:183). He decided that he would share his love for reading with others and conceived of creating the first public library and a museum in the area to serve the community. In fact, Ptolemy [Alexander's successor in Egypt] developed the interest in reading and determined to make Alexandria's dreams become true, and later Ptolemy III [grandson to Ptolemy] had the Torah translated into Greek to benefit the children of the Ptolemy family. Children become more interested and engaged with their environment when guided and encouraged to make real choices based on their individual needs. Selecting books, toys, construction materials, and activities allows young children to initiate their own play and provides them with positive learning experiences (Feingberg, 1946:20). It is important to note that children learn with entire bodies. Through drawing or scribbling, young children discover cause and effect as they begin to notice that their motor action leaves marks on the page (Feingberg, 1946:8). Trips to libraries should begin early as soon as children know how to handle books. Children can also be encouraged to select their own books and to talk, discuss, question, tell stories and listen, and use the library, learn about their cultures and religious beliefs. Taking advantage of the existing development strategies in the country would provide the way forward for family literacy in Uganda.

### **3. The state of family literacy in Uganda**

Literature indicates that Uganda has a population of 24.7 million with 12.1 million being males, and 12.6 million females (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2003<sub>a</sub>:1). The enrolment in Primary education schools stood at 7.354 millions by 2003 (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2003<sub>b</sub>:8). Uganda's literacy status for the population-aged 10 years is 70% with the female literacy of 63% while the male literacy being 70% (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2003<sub>b</sub>:9). It is the aim of education to eradicate illiteracy and equip the individual with basic skills and knowledge to exploit the environment for self-development as well as national development for better health, nutrition and family life, and the capacity of continued learning (Uganda 1992:8). However, 14% of the children are orphans, and about 3.2% have lost both parents, 2.2% had lost their mothers and 8.4 had lost their fathers, while 15% of the children are engaged in child labour (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2003<sub>b</sub>:15). The national aspiration regarding poverty is to ensure its eradication in Uganda. The Government of Uganda developed the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) with the aim of reducing mass poverty by the year 2017. The main desire is to see rapid transformation in the rural sector that brings it to relative parity in development with urban centres. The goal is to ensure 'individuals who are intellectually developed, skilled, productive, purposeful in life, prudent, earn meaningful incomes, save and invest, are well provided for and enjoy socio-economic security and reasonable standards of living (Uganda 1999:36). It is the national vision to promote non-formal education and functional literacy programmes in all districts and at community level (Uganda, 1999:90). This paper attempts to establish the role of various stakeholders in the development of family literacy and the current practices on how parents and children learn together. The problems faced by family literacy development, and strategies for such in Uganda are discussed. The paper suggests family literacy implications for developing countries like Uganda.

### **4. Methodology**

The study was conducted in Uganda. Through a qualitative design approach, the study reviewed a number of government and non-governmental documents that tend to address the

development of family literacy in the country. A field study was also conducted in all five divisions of Kampala district to assess and establish the best approach for enabling parents and children read together. These divisions are Central, Kawempe, Makindye, Nakawa, and Rubaga Divisions. Kampala district was selected because of the social problems associated with cities found in most homes in families like lack of proper accommodation and reading facilities in homes. More so, more parents in cities don't have enough time with their children as most of the time they are engaged in business and office work. To obtain a sample size, students in a certificate programme of library and information services class at Makerere University, that was meant to establish the information literacy levels in Ugandan families were asked to indicate in which village they live or have access to any family outside their home. Out of 98 students, 56 of the students identified villages in Kampala District that influenced the choice of the area of study. Through a class discussion, students were given an assignment to identify the level of family literacy in respective families. Guiding questions were provided to all 98 students. A register of the assignments was made indicating the district, division /sub County, parish, and village, as they were required to indicate on the register. On receiving the assignment back, students were required to present their work to the lecturer concerned. The assignments were examined and sorted according to the best questions answered as per the guiding questions provided. Having selected Kampala district purposively, 2 parishes in each division and consequently one village for each parish were randomly selected. This enabled the purposive selection of the family in that village from the marked, qualified and sorted assignments. Families selected were those with both parents with at least a child in the family. This was actually a requirement for consideration in choosing the family. In total, 10 families (numbered from 1 to 10) were selected and studied, 2 from each division. Heads of the family, age of the family head and wife, their education, number of children, and employment of the parents were recorded. One child was identified in a family as part of the study and his/her age and a class of study was also recorded as seen in the table below.

**Table 2: Selection of Study Respondents**

Division	Parish	Village	Family	AF	AM	FE	ME	Child	EF	EM	AC	EC
Central	Kamwokya	Kisiminti	1	37	32	Diploma	O-level	3	business	Business	8	P3
Central	Nakasero II	Nakasero	2	30	25	Diploma	Certificate	7	Accountant	Secretary	7	P2
Kawempe	Kyebando	Kisalosallo	3	40	34	Graduate	Diploma	2	Art & Design		12	P6
Kawempe	Makerere II	Zone A	4	52	43	Certificate	O-level	11	Mechanic	Business	9	P4
Makindye	Kansanga	Wheeling Zone	5	37	33	Degree	Diploma	1	business	Business	4	Nursery
Makindye	Nsambya Central	Nsdabya Gogonya (East)	6	40	35	Diploma	Certificate (Teacher)	4	Teacher	Teacher	12	P5
Nakawa	Luzira	Safina	7	50	45	Diploma	O-level	3	business	Hwife	8	P4
Nakawa	UPK	UNISE	8	36	32	O-level	Primary	3	Capenter	Self	8	P3
Rubaga	Lubya	Namungoona-Church Zone	9	34	29	Primary	Teacher	5	business	Casual	9	P4
Rubaga	Nakulabye	Zone 4	10	35	30	Primary	Primary	4	LCI Chair	Hwife	11	P6

*Key: AF= Age of the father, AM= Age of the mother, FE= fathers highest education, ME= mothers highest education, EF= employment of the father, EM= employment of a mother, AC= age of the child, EC= education of a child.*

The fathers' age ranged from 34 to 52 years whereas the mothers' age ranged from 25 to 45. Majority of men had education to the level of a diploma (4), few (2) with lower education of P.7. Majority of men were businessmen while women were housewives. The age group of the children considered for the study ranged from 4 (for nursery) to 12 (for P6) with majority of

them (3) for P.4. From each family, the study attempted to establish the stakeholders in that family and their contribution to the development of the family literacy. The study also attempted to establish activities of circumstances when children and parents learn and read together. The problems faced by the family and suggested strategies for increasing access to learning and reading together to promote family literacy were established. The findings from the survey were integrated and discussed with the information available in literature and experiences.

## **5.Findings**

### **5.1 Stakeholders in Family literacy**

From the study, it was clear that the government and non-governmental organisations have played a role in the promotion and development of family literacy in Uganda.

#### **a) The Government role in family Literacy**

The Government of Uganda's constitution specifies that: "Every effort shall be made to integrate all peoples of Uganda while at the same time recognising the existence of their ethnic, religious, ideological, political, and cultural diversity" (Uganda 1995, Article 1). The Government accords education as a fundamental human right. This aspiration is re-affirmed by the Visions of the World Declaration on Education for All, the World Summit for Children (1990), the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), the World Conference on Special Needs Education (1994), Forum on Education for All (1996), and the International Conference on Child Labour (1997) that have declared the need for reducing illiteracy (UNESCO, 2001:27). That is why the education for all strategy should be placed within a sustainable and well-integrated policy framework linked to poverty eradication, population strategies and promotion of gender equality (UNECISO, 2001:32).

Secondly, the freedom, prosperity and the development of a society and individuals are fundamental human values. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights by UNESCO, 1994, Article 16(3), declares that a family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by the society and state. Accordingly, the *Domestic Relations Bill*, Article 1(3) defines a family to mean a husband and wife and their children if any. According to the bill, it is the duty of the parents (spouses) to maintain their family. In 1994, UNESCO Public Library Manifesto defined the public library as a living force for education, culture and information and as an essential agent for fostering peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women (UNESCO, 1994:2).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26(1-2) states that everyone has the right to education. According to the Article, education shall be free, and shall be directed to the full development of the human personality, and to the strengthening of respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Section 3 of the same article provides that parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children. Article 34(2) of the Uganda Constitution, Article 28(1) of the Conversion of Rights of the Child and with the African charter on the Rights and welfare of the Child which Uganda ratified in 1994, and the Children Statue Section 6(1)(a) 1996 (FHRI, 2000:63) protects the right of children to education and thus family literacy. In the Uganda context, a child is defined as a person below 18 years. On the other hand an orphan is a child who has lost at least one of the parents (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2003<sub>b</sub>:11). To ensure the rights of children and obligations of

parents are maintained, it requires empowering the community with the abilities to access information through appropriate technologies for integrating community/society needs into the national development plans. There are a number of development partners who have attempted at addressing the family needs; some of the few selected do not show the interaction of parents and children in a family.

The government has continually supported and collaborated with NGO's to support family literacy. Through the government, NGO's have supported the government programmes like Universal Primary Education, Functional Adult Literacy that has promoted literacy in the individual families and communities. In the field study, one respondent, appreciated that in all areas he has stayed, he has benefited from family literacy programmes like UPLIFT-Uganda that operates inside of West Nile Literacy Project Nebbi. More so, Family Basic Education (FABE) that operates within Literacy Adult Basic Education (LABE) is an innovative programme piloted in Bugiri district. According to Owor, joint parent-adult sessions, workshops for parents, adult educators and teachers as well as a series of teachers and parents' guides facilitate the family literacy. The target of FABE is to have parents utilise schools in the afternoon to understand what is taught to their children. They are also taught essentials of parenting and life skills. In fact, the Children Statue 1996 is intended to provide the ability of the child's parents, guardians or custodians to meet the needs of the child (Uganda, 1996, Section 4). Section 7 of the same Act puts the duty and responsibility of looking after a child on the parents. According to the Act, parents have the duty to give the child education and guidance, love care and protection and all rights set out in this Statue. There is hardly any programme to ensure how the children's rights are guided in the development of family literacy. Few of them concentrate on child abuse, human rights, and development of physio-socio skills. Those that deal with family literacy do not have a strategy for involving parents and children in family literacy activities. The table below describes the roles of various stakeholders in the family literacy.

Key player	Roles in family literacy
Parents	Payment of school fees. Providing scholastic materials, and textbooks to the children. It was clear that parents provide leadership to entire family. Teaching their children in ways of culture, discipline, and how to settle some disputes in the society. Parents participate in community work with children. Participating in home story telling like proverbs, superstition stories contribute to the family literacy.
Children	Elder brothers and sisters of children teach young ones how to do 'it' including swimming, reading, and writing. The brothers and sisters' getting involved in taking young children for outing contribute to the development of family literacy. The fact that children inform their parents of their difficulties which they encounter help in the development of family literacy.
Cultural members and Relatives	Relatives (Aunts and Uncles) and cultural leaders build cultural and custom practices among the children. They give advice on their past experiences, and expectations of a child as he/she grows. For example, how to bind with culture and customs e.g. respecting elders and participating in community work. They provide suggestions and guidelines which children may draw on when understanding their culture. Demonstrating to the children the decent ways of dressing, ways of giving respect, and issues related to privacy help in the development of family literacy.
Community	The surrounding environment has helped children to socialise and learn how to communicate to develop language. For example, in most of the places visited, children were speaking Luganda very well as influenced by the environment. The community environment builds children to suit the community and socio cultural.
Church	This is gained through attending church services for the case of parents and Sunday school for children. In addition, the parents attend group fellowships that help to acquire knowledge and skills to build up a family. Church has contributed in funding some children to attend schools. The mothers participate in Church choir and in the promotion of moral values and children activities.

Parents are the pillars of family literacy. For example, according to one respondent, reading,

playing together, tell stories to children, dancing and singing together with children helps in developing family literacy. For example, praying to God and reading the bible together, parents' involvement in guiding children to their culture, and up dating knowledge about early sex in young children contribute to the development of family literacy. The church contributes to the family's spiritual growth. The fact that the church teaches believers about loving neighbours and friends to avoid conflict, discourage sins like killing, and prostitution. This has helped the bringing up well the disciplined children that provide respect for family. That is why (Nkawake, 2003:91) believes that there is every reason why our parents especially women should take a role in enhancing family literacy.

## 5.2 How Parents and Children Can Read and Learn Together

This study attempted to establish the ways how children and parents learn and read together. Attending church services, planning and doing community and homework together, has contributed to family literacy as shown in the table below.

<b>Approaches</b>	<b>Explanations</b>
Church Services and Bible studies:	Involvement in Bible studies and talk about God and sharing the word of God together help children's literacy. Bible reading is the most common activity children and parents do together. In majority of the families, before sleeping, children and parents sit together and say a word of prayer. Other families appreciated the fact that children enjoy going to church together with their parents.
Consulting Books and Reading Together:	In a few instances, reading newspapers was observed in some families. It was expressed that youth-targeted newspapers like Straight Talk have helped bridge the communication gap between children and parents. Only 2 families said that they visit libraries and exhibitions and bookshops together with their children. However, majority of them seemed to believe that reading novels can check reading skills of their children. Majority of homes agreed that they listen to radio and watch TV together with their children. Some families appreciated some educational programmes on TV concerning how children are being tortured, kidnapped, raped, etc as learning lessons for children.
Planning and doing community work together:	It was clear that the fact that parents participate with their children in cooking, washing, and engaging in crafts like weaving the baskets help their children to learn together.
Homework help:	It was established that parents bring their homework to parents for help. This consists of revising with children their previous exercise. They are also involved in giving guidelines on assignment given to children at school. Sharing life experiences that relate to their studies for example how people are dying of AIDS help children to relate it to what they learn in class.
Community Participation:	It was established that story telling giving histories and fiction and poems to children, participating in music, family visits, attending community meetings, attending the sick in hospitals, burial activities, wedding parties help children understand what they learn in class. Parents have also been instrumental in teaching their children the table manners while eating together.
Family Visits:	In most homes, there was existence of family days like Sundays, Christmas days, Birth days of children and parents, and Easter days. In most of these days, parents and children organise parties, pencils, and outings. It was also common in most of the families that they visit places like wildlife education centres, Didi's World, Kiwatule Recreational Centres and others. In some cases, it was observed that some families play games together with their children. Majority of the families pay visits to their friends together.

In fact, the reading tents organised in Uganda encourage the interaction between the parents and children (Ukech, 2004:21). Actually at one of the closing functions of a reading tent in Uganda, the Omukama Gafabusa Iguru I (2004:1) said: 'We have no option but to turn our efforts to popularising our Stories through writing...and to cultivate the habit of reading so that the young generations get to learn our traditional values'. For example the Book People

project by KK Executive club in Uganda aims at promoting Literacy and education. The Club distributes books to schools, churches, and community groups. Through Libraries, parents need to be educated about what their children like to read, and be encouraged to make use of library. For example, the Masaka Kitabiro a community library in Masaka district is set to achieve its mission of making books available to schools, institutions and families. It also offers adult education classes and promotes back to books philosophy (Batambuze, 2002:12). In 1999, UNESCO adopted the School Library Manifesto in teaching and learning for all that: "The school library services must be provided equally to all members of the school community, regardless of age, race, gender, religion, nationality, language, profession and social status". It adds that, "governments, through their ministries responsible for education, are urged to develop strategies, policies and plans that implement the principles of this manifesto". (UNESCO, 1999).

### **5.3 Problems that limit parents and children to read and learn together**

There are a number of problems facing parents and children in their attempt to read and learn together.

**a) Poverty:** It was common saying that poverty affects the family literacy. It was observed that some people are too poor to afford school fees, and to provide essential facilities to their children. Poor provision of scholastic materials, meals and others all reduce the child's morals of reading and learning together. Inadequate and delayed funds force children move from one school to others.

#### **b) Generation Gap and Choice of Interest**

The gap between children and parents is big. This brings a communication gap between parents and children. In some cases parents fear children to laugh at them in case they fail to answer some questions in which children want help. Further more, children have choices of TV different from those of their parents. For example the love for pornography and other movies, and special pages of newspapers like senga, Sweknazi, etc have affected the parent's participation in learning with their children.

#### **c) Domestic Problems**

It was observed that family experiences and pressure of co-wives and step parents limit the progress of family literacy: some children are sickly, and some are low learners. This affects the rate at which the parents would participate in reading and learning. Other problems include demographic changes, changes in family life, divorce, legal battle for child, single parent family, working mothers, child nurturing and television violence. Poor family/home background, competition from other activities and interests also affect the literacy in families (Ssentuwa, 2004:60). That is why Serwaga (2001:21) proclaims: "We are more interested in how the child develops his potential rather than how he does in relation to others".

#### **d) Parent's involvement and Lack of time for and contact with Children**

Many children blamed the participation to the rudeness of parents. In most cases, children tend to be shy to their parent's even keep quiet. It was noted that parents get tired for the repeated questions that the child asks. For example in one family, it was noted that both parents drink, and it is difficult for them to get any free time to share and learn together with children as a family. Failure to tell children about the state of the affairs of parents limits children's learning. For example, some children get information about their parents themselves that affect them psychologically. For instance, in one family both parents are a working class and come back tired and are unable to give their children attention. They

confessed that the only thing they do is seeing them off to bed. Parents have other responsibilities, which consume most of the time. More so, in most cases parents believe that it is the duty of the teacher to teach children, after school fees have been paid, so there is no need to burden parents with children's home work.

It was observed that the pressure of work by parents, drunkenness of parents, father coming back late affect the development of literacy levels. Parents give children very little time because they come back when they are tired. One child noted that their 'father drinks a lot and disturbs them'. In fact one father parent who responded to the study said, he doesn't get enough time to stay with children so that he can teach them little, although he knows the wife doesn't know English. It was expressed that although children who attend in boarding schools or stay in hostels may perform well, they miss the social contact of the parents and this affects their learning capacities for long life learning. In many families, they lack a timetable for meeting parents and children. There is lack of programming on their part as parents especially during the school time. Fitting in home activities on a serious program in addition to their work schedules is still a failure on their part. According to some parents, the children are used to teachers and so they don't trust what their parents tell them. It was observed that the commitments by businessmen and women, and parents working abroad or outside families affect the children's social contact with children.

**e) Environment:** In most of the homes, there was no conducive environment for reading. Most homes are characterised by a lot of noise. In one family, a child of P6 has to work in the evening to look for school fees, he said. In the 2 families that lived in single rooms, there is hardly space to sit down together and learn as a family, and that is one other reason why some fathers come late at night. One parent sleeps with his children in one roomed house, and says "if I want my wife, I make sure, I do it very late in the night when children have slept".

**f) Seriousness of children:** Most of the children take matters jokingly some parents say. Learning together involves persuading children. Some children dictate over the parents claiming they are tired or sick in an effort to dodge reading and learning together.

**g) Language Difference:** The differences in languages spoken by family members affect the participation of parents to read and learn together with children. Whereas teaching in most of the schools is done in English, majority of homes use mother tongue to communicate in the home. For example, one child noted that when relatives are many at home they 'over use' mother tongue. The over use of mother tongue makes it difficult for the parents to understand and translate the child's work in English, one child explained.

**h) Lack of home Libraries:** In most of the homes, there is lack of reading materials. Some families have no access and capacity to buy the reading materials, like newspapers and magazines. Few of the families have books to read. Although there are chances of using the school libraries in the area, there is no strategy that enforces children to use books at home. Besides, there is no motivation for using such facilities. For example, one mother said that although she has a chance to borrow books from the school library, many times she is unable to do so because of her busy schedule.

#### **5.4 Strategies for Family Literacy**

Family members were asked to suggest ways on how learning and reading together of children and parents can be promoted in Uganda. Below are a few of the suggested strategies.

**Government support:** It was the respondents' wish for having free education beyond primary level. Families demanded that the government to provide meals and scholastic materials to relieve them from the burden of fees. One child said 'I wish that the government could provide us with free text books and materials used at school'. One parent who is also a teacher suggested for the harmonisation of salary structure of teachers across the board to avoid primary teachers being underlooked. It was also suggested that the government should give loans to parents (especially women) and grants to enable them develop the family capacity. In fact, one parent suggested to the government to provide scholarships and bursaries at LCI level.

**Adult and Continuing Education Programme:** There seemed to be a demand for go back to school policy among the parents. According to parents, there is a need for adult classes to be started at lower levels of governance. It was suggested that linking functional adult literacy among parents and adults with the family environment would help improve learning and reading in the family. Many parents suggested that adult centres be spread all over the Parishes and LCI. In fact, one father and his wife wished to go back to school when they get enough money in future.

**Support for Home and Community Libraries:** There appeared to be a need for establishing book libraries and community resource centres, and provision of reading materials by family members to children. Some parents showed a need to encourage other services like computer use, and Internet. It was suggested that adult literacy should ensure that parents have the ability to access reading materials. It was noted that buying educational books for reference in families, newspapers and magazines for children, and utilising the school libraries can facilitate literacy in the family. For example, one Husband promised: 'I will make it a point to bring a newspaper to my wife every day'. One parent suggested to the government to provide books for young ones. Another parent wished. 'If they could have a library stocked with different textbooks and other learning materials'.

**Sensitising parents.** It was the study's finding that parents need sensitisation that ranges from acknowledging the value of education to the ability to access information. In fact, parents suggest strategies for holding family meetings, attending public lecturers and meetings together, and encouraging elder children to express interest in learning to the young ones. For example, it was suggested that parents and children should always participate in youth conferences and AIDS conferences to enable children understand the magnitude of the HIV/AIDS problem.

**Community Co-operation and participation:** Respondents suggested for a corroboration of stakeholders including cultural leaders, educationists, parents, and the government. For example, LCI should do its role of fighting such acts like attending discos and playing cards. The police too should keep law and order to ensure security. During holiday, parents should take children to do community work like gardening to teach them how to cultivate crops. Medical workers should always provide medical care teaching to both children and parents on how to take the right dosage of medicine, giving information on feeding habits, and sexual and reproductive health.

**Religious Support:** Religious institutions/leaders should help parents in teaching how children should be obedient. They should organise such activities like watching movies, which attract parents and children to learn together.

**Incentives for Children:** Like teachers in class, parents should learn how to give incentives to children so that they can like reading and learning together. Parents should find out from teachers their children's progress and performance and what a child needs and wants. Parents need to buy supplementary items that can support learning at home like charts, toys to aid children learn. In fact, some parents believe traditional prizes of giving sweets play a role in building a liking for learning and reading among children.

**Children's Programmes and Exposure:** It is a fact that having access to television and radio programmes help to educate children on culture. For instance radio stations have special programmes for children e.g. Children's club and *Omuti Omuto* programmes on WBS TV increase access to learning. More so, family groups that can visit learning centres like Wildlife education centre, children's park, National Museums, etc can help children learn. Likewise forming group fellowships, attending village parties, and get-together parties of the peer groups, which involves parents and children.

## **6. Implications**

Empowerment of the community in information literacy initiatives makes better use of education, better standards of public health, and builds an informed society. The family literacy initiative would be a cost effective intervention to developing countries to enable the development of reading culture in the country for life long learning towards an information society. Many programmes have been developed around the country that attempt to help and strengthen families ranging from information and referral services for day care to parental education and self-help programs. The role of government with regard to protecting the children is one move towards advocating for family literacy. The integration of family literacy agendas into the government development goals will contribute to building life long learning and a reading culture among parents and children.

Family literacy is believed to be an effective way to build literacy skills in both adults and children. There is a need of involving the family in family literacy training and awareness programmes. This will encourage parents and children to develop their language skills together. Family literacy should work on the principles that when parents and children read and learn together, they motivate and support each other. It should ensure that all children have access to the skills they need to succeed. It is able to increase access for parents and children to these approaches. It is therefore important to have early enrolment of children by involving the mothers. Promotion of oral language development in babies and toddlers is required. This requires a positive and supportive environment for parents to gain skills and confidence to ensure that children are introduced to language, listening and memory development skills.

A total holistic approach to serving young children and families requires active participation in community networks, partnerships, and collaborations. Inter disciplinary training and professional involvement, policies and procedures, and strategies for self-motivated learning for and among parents and children environment are required. This requires a strategy to create an environment among children and parents to exploit opportunities for discovery and creativity in fostering emergent literacy and building self-esteem in them. That is why the government has to meet its role to enforce the existing and/or enact policies to enable families develop information literacy skills for life long learning.

## **Recommendations for Developing Countries**

It is important to give a conducive environment to motivate children in reading. This requires a programme that attempts to define the roles, and responsibilities of children and parents in family literacy. Such responsibilities should provide an environment that ensures the command of respect in a family, recognising the role of parents, church, community, libraries, relatives, government, but be guided by your children's abilities. Such programme would recognise the children that aren't academically aggressive and building a good will among parents to maintain a good relationship with children. The programme should ensure that a child (mostly gifted children) build abilities of exploiting the available opportunities, and should encourage him or her to discover and develop interests independent of the parents advice and find his or her own direction.

An outreach programme with books for babies can promote the love for reading. This may involve presenting parents of newborn babies with a book bag containing materials that support and encourage reading to babies and young children. This is followed up with informal activities including discussions of the importance of reading, newsletters and/or workshops for parents. Family clubs (Homespun) for few parents and children should promote book-sharing strategies. A facilitator helps parents develop book-sharing strategies, engage in informal writing and gain exposure to a wide variety of high-quality children's literature. Mixed Age Groupings to enable older children to offer support to young ones can function as 'master players' incorporating younger children into episodes of more complex play than the young ones could reach on their own.

Encouraging that every family has a small library, and parents and children borrow books to read at home is an appropriate strategy. In homes, a literacy corner to make sure they have a place to keep books, pens, rulers-a good environment in which to concentrate may contribute to better work. Parents and children should form book clubs to enable members to borrow books and read together. Parents should attempt to encourage but monitor pen friends network between the children and groups. All these require community, government and school cooperation. For example, community centres, notice boards and structures can facilitate the coordination of the reading clubs in mobilisation and sensitisation within the community.

Parents should take their fatherly motherly role to promote family literacy. For example, parents can guide children in homework help to make sure that children are aware of the consequences of being negligence about studies. Further more, parents should attempt to give advice when where necessary from schools. Teachers (schools) too should attempt to find out wide range of activities and opportunities available in the community when giving out homework, to find something that parents and children can enjoy and learn together to enable children do reasonably well.

Generally, it can be concluded that building information literacy skills among Adults (Parents) and Children will enhance Family Literacy levels in the Country.

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