

Children's Book Practice and Policy  
Baseline Report:  
Capitation Grants & Recreational Reading  
Materials  
April 2014



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## Executive Summary

Through the support of the Innovation for Education fund (a partnership between the Governments of Rwanda and the UK) and Comic Relief, Save the Children is currently in the implementation phase of The Rwandan Children’s Book Initiative (RCBI). RCBI is a component of Save the Children’s ‘Advancing Children’s Right to Read’ program in Rwanda. RCBI recognizes that the development of critical and life-long reading habits can only be attained if children are provided with sufficient quantities of engaging and relevant books.

It is a considerable challenge to dramatically improve literacy rates and develop a culture of reading and writing if books are scarce, not relevant to the needs and interests of potential readers, expensive and/or difficult to access. The first step in building a literate society is creating an environment conducive to the development of a robust book sector that will significantly increase the number and quality of books available to the population. Unless there are relevant books available to all sectors of the population, and in sufficient quantities, it will be difficult if not impossible to significantly change the reading levels and habits of existing and future generations. The second step is putting in place structures and policies that will ensure that potential readers have access to these books, and that they develop the habits of mind associated with lifelong reading.

RCBI seeks to ensure that Rwandan children have increased access to reading materials to support their intellectual, economic, social and cultural growth and development, both as individuals and as a society, by encouraging the development and distribution of books and the promotion of a healthy national book industry. With an explicit focus on developing quality children’s books in Kinyarwanda, RCBI’s unique, whole-system approach requires the project to engage in the following key activities:

1. support local and regional publishers to produce high quality, age appropriate, local language storybooks for children;
2. stimulate supply and demand for these storybooks;
3. provide the purchased materials to target intervention primary schools;
4. train teachers, head teachers, sector education officers, mentors and Teacher Trainings Centres’ pre-service teachers to use the materials effectively to better support literacy acquisition and learning outcomes;
5. generate evidence to influence effective replication, scale up and policy change.

Through these key activities, RCBI’s innovative public-private partnership aims to “make more and better children’s books” available in Rwanda.

## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

9YBE- Nine Years Basic Education

CPMD- Curriculum Production and Materials Distribution (Department of REB)

EDC – Education Development Centre

EDPRS- Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy

ESSP – Education Sector Strategic Plan

GoR- Government of Rwanda

MINEDUC – Ministry of Education

MINECOFIN- Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

QIWG- Quality Education Working Group

REB – Rwanda Education Board

RENCP- Rwanda Education NGO Coordination Platform

RCBI- Rwanda Children’s Book Initiative

RRI – Rwanda Reads Initiative

ToR- Terms of Reference

UNICEF- United Nations Children's Fund

USAID- United States Agency for International Development

VSO- Volunteer Services Overseas (UK)

## I. Context

In Vision 2020, the Government of Rwanda (GoR) communicated its commitment to transitioning Rwanda from a subsistence agriculture economy to a knowledge -based society and middle income-country by 2020.<sup>1</sup> A key component of that transition is improving literacy skills and nurturing the development of a generation of avid, critical readers. This can only be accomplished by creating environments where literacy flourishes – where reading and writing are both encouraged and rewarded, where citizens have access to quality reading materials, to informed reading instruction, and to community structures and resources that support their efforts to become proficient readers and writers. The achievement of the goals outlined in Vision 2020 will depend in large part on Rwanda’s ability to nurture a culture of reading and writing– in the home, in schools and in the community.

The most recent draft of the ESSP acknowledges the importance of schools in developing lifelong habits of reading and a culture of reading and in ensuring that students develop the foundational skills necessary to move from ‘learning to read’ to ‘reading to learn’ across all subjects in the curriculum.<sup>2</sup> The ESSP also recognizes that achieving this goal will require concentrated efforts on a variety of fronts, including ensuring that current and pre-service teachers are trained in effective reading classroom practices and provided with evidence-based reading instructional materials. Additionally, primary school timetables should allocate a minimal amount of time each week to both the teaching of reading and to personal reading, so that students across all grade levels have sufficient access to high quality and engaging recreational or supplementary reading materials. Schools and communities also need to institute campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of reading and to develop students’ interest in reading.

Research indicates reading results are higher in countries where teachers allow time for silent reading and encourage children to read often.<sup>3</sup> Having access to books at school and developing the habit of reading for pleasure have also been demonstrated to have dramatic results in terms of increased vocabulary and text comprehension and improvements in writing skills and self expression.<sup>4</sup> Reading books is a cause and not merely a reflection, of children’s levels of reading proficiency.

Therefore, provisions for basic collections of attractive reading materials and the introduction of very simple practices, such as a silent reading period at the beginning of the school day where students have the freedom to select and read engaging books, should be implemented as they strongly correlate with high reading scores, as has more instructional time devoted to reading and more borrowing of books from libraries. Personal reading must become an important part of the curriculum, and borrowing reading materials, be it from a classroom collection or the

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<sup>1</sup> MINECOFIN, "Rwanda Vision 2020," Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, (Kigali, Rwanda 2000).

<sup>2</sup> MINEDUC, "Education Sector Strategic Plan 2013/14-----2017/18," Feb 2014 Draft.

<sup>3</sup> Edley, W., 1996.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson & Fielding, 1988, quoted in Anderson, R.C., 1996

school library, must be expected and must become a mandatory part of the formal school curriculum if learners are to develop their reading skills and, develop the habits of mind associated with lifelong readers.

The Rwanda Education Board (REB), through the Rwanda Reads Initiative, is committed to putting in place measures to increase children's and communities' access to high quality reading materials. In early 2011, the Quality Education Working Group (QIWG), co-chaired by the Director General of the REB and UNICEF, identified the transformation of reading habits in Rwanda as a priority in the medium term. The QIWG recommended the establishment of the Rwanda Reads Initiative (RRI) to ensure the achievement of this goal and the establishment of a reading culture throughout the country. To that end, the strategic framework of the RRI includes, as one of its primary objectives that, every school and community have access to adequate supplementary reading materials of quality (Objective 2.1). The framework acknowledges that achieving that objective will require increasing school – and student - access to quality reading materials, and developing the capacity of local and regional authors and publishers to produce quality materials.

The new five-year poverty reduction strategic plan (EDPRS2) includes measures to both increase the amount of recreational reading materials available at the school and community level as well as children's exposure to these materials.<sup>5</sup> Specific outputs identified include improving the student/book ratio by increasing both the number and quantity of reading materials available in schools, as well as increasing students' access to reading material by strengthening the capacity of schools and teachers to use recreational reading materials in the classroom (Outputs 3.4 and 3.5).

Although Rwanda has put in place the foundations for building a nation of readers, it will need strong policies and associated practices if it is to build upon this foundation and achieve the goals outlined in the RRI framework and re-iterated in the EDPRS. The terms of reference identified by Save the Children will enable the REB to identify specific areas in need of attention over the short and medium term, as well as specific policies and practices to support the development of a nation of readers.

## II. Objectives

In support of the RCBI's policy and advocacy work, the Terms of Reference for the Children's Book Practice Baseline outlined two objectives designed to assist Save the Children to identify priority policies and practices that will further their efforts to advance the literacy agenda in Rwanda. These objectives are:

- Identify the percentage of Fiscal Year 2013-14 GoR budget dedicated to storybook distribution in schools nationwide and in Gicumbi District, focusing on Gicumbi schools' use of the 2013 capitation grant.
- Produce a report with recommendations for how Save the Children can best take this work forward.

With a broader look at the literacy agenda in Rwanda, the following embedded research questions were investigated during the study period:

- To what extent is the current decentralized distribution system resulting in recreational reading materials arriving at the school level as expected?
- To what extent do current practices support the effective production, procurement, distribution and use of children's books?
- Based on an analysis of CPMD data, how have schools in the Gicumbi district used the capitation grant to promote recreational reading in schools?
- What efforts are being made by publishers and by REB to increase the quality of books available to schools?
- To what extent do current practices inhibit the effective production, procurement, distribution or use of children's books?
- What are the current challenges to increasing the amount of reading materials in schools and in the community?
- What challenges do publishers face in increasing the number of titles available or in increasing the quality of books? (i.e., What specific policies and conditions stifle greater production of books from publishers?)
- What changes at either the policy or the practices level could be implemented by Save the Children in order to best take this work forward?

### III. Methodology

The information presented in this report was collected through a mixed methods research design that combined qualitative and quantitative methods. The research involved semi-structured interviews with P1-P3 teachers, school staff responsible for placing instructional materials orders, P1-P3 students, as well as informal fact-checking interviews with REB staff.

#### Quantitative Sampling Framework

In order to identify the percentage of the 2013-14 Fiscal Year GoR budget dedicated to storybook distribution in schools nationwide and in Gicumbi District, statistical data was collected from the Rwanda Education Board- CPMD (Curricula, Material Production & Distribution), the 2013-14 National Budget, and the revised ESSP. This quantitative data was triangulated to ensure accuracy.

#### Qualitative Sampling Framework

In order to examine school's qualitative usage of the grants, supplementary materials order forms from 11 schools in Gicumbi district were collected from the REB-CPMD procurement specialist (see sample in Appendix 1). The schools were randomly selected and ranged from three different sectors: Byumba, Bukure and Bwisige. The order forms were analyzed and semi-structured interviews were tailored to address the specific decision making processes of each school.

Data collection tools were adapted and modified from the RCBI baseline study conducted in September 2013. The tools were then translated and field-tested prior to being employed. In each school, teachers, administrators and students were interviewed, and the storage and availability of books were surveyed.

The following qualitative tools (annexed to this report as Appendices 4-7) were used to answer the above mentioned research questions:

1. Book Committee member survey;
2. Teacher survey;
3. Student survey;
4. Library / Book Storage Observation Checklist.

Data from each qualitative component of the study was coded and interpreted for convergence, complementarity and discrepancy. From this analysis, hypotheses on themes that cut across the findings from different methods were formulated, further examined, and presented in the report.

### **Secondary data**

The extent to which the findings from the Gicumbi data collection aligned with findings in other studies was also examined. These include the Transparency International Public Expenditure in Education Tracking Survey, the Concern 2012 study of community-based barriers and opportunities to reading attainment, and the L3 baseline study. This triangulation also included an examination of teachers' and parents' beliefs and practices with respect to reading.

### **Limitations**

Due to the small and homogenous sample of 11 schools all of which are located within a single district, the qualitative findings on children's book practices are not intended to be representative of nationwide practices. Rather, they function as insights into observed tendencies of practice that may exist within government schools.

## IV. Findings

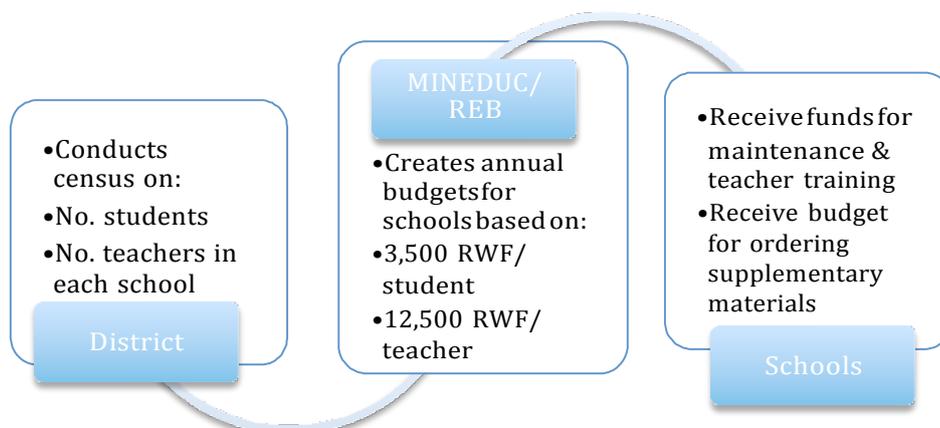
This section provides an overview of findings emerging from the study on book practices in Gicumbi district schools. Subsections have been organized to address the findings relating to the previously listed research questions.

### What percentage of the annual fiscal budget is dedicated to storybook distribution?

In 2009, the government of Rwanda instituted the 9-year basic education program (9YBE) to provide free education for six years of primary and the first three years of secondary to all its citizens<sup>6</sup>. To support schools' operations, and allow pupils from vulnerable households to have access to an education, capitation grants were made available annually to public primary and secondary schools. Capitation grants help support costs associated with maintenance, teacher salaries and teacher training, and the purchase of instructional materials, thus allowing schools to improve the quality of the education they provide.

Capitation grants include a pre-determined percentage amount specifically allocated to the school's procurement of instructional materials. To determine the percentage, district offices ensure that each school conducts a census to determine the number of enrolled pupils and employed teachers. This information is communicated to the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), which then compiles the data and hands it over to the Ministry of Finance and Economic planning (MINECOFIN). MINECOFIN then calculates capitation grants for each school, based on the rate of RWF 3,500 per primary student per annum<sup>7</sup>, and RWF12,500<sup>8</sup> per month per teacher, and disburses funds directly to the account of each school.

Figure 2: Capitation Grant Allocation Process



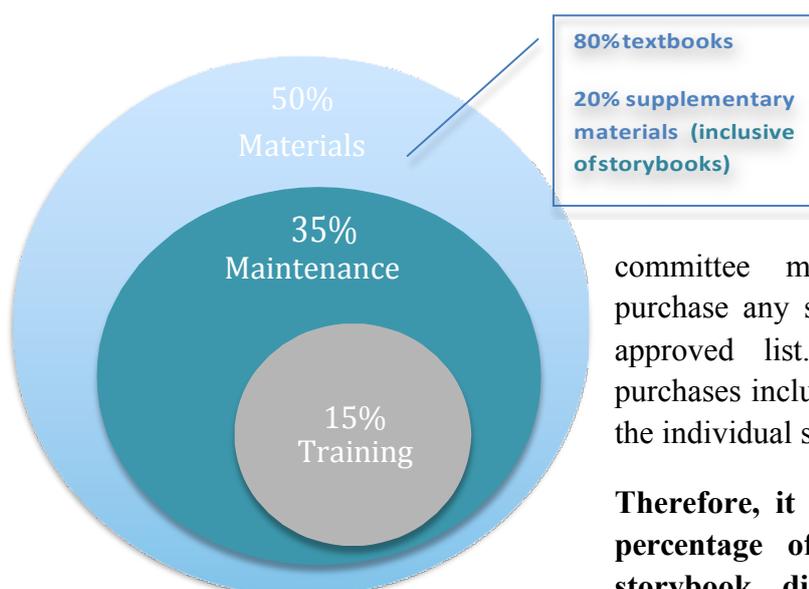
<sup>6</sup> TIR, "Rwanda Public Expenditure Tracking Survey in Education (9ybe)," (Kigali, Rwanda: Transparency International Rwanda, 2012) p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> MINEDUC, "Education Sector Strategic Plan 2010-2015", (Kigali, Rwanda, 2014) p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> TIR, "Rwanda Public Expenditure Tracking Survey in Education (9ybe)," (Kigali, Rwanda: Transparency International Rwanda, 2012) p. 9; IPAR, "School Funding & Equity in Rwanda", (Kigali, Rwanda: Institute of Policy Analysis and Research-Rwanda, 2012) p. 16

**MINEDUC guidelines state that 50% of this total calculated capitation grant amount is intended to provide school materials such as books, 35% is intended for school rehabilitations and construction, while the remaining 15% is intended for capacity building of teachers.**<sup>9</sup> Focusing on the 50% allocated for school materials, 80% of that amount is earmarked for the procurement of primary instructional materials (textbooks), and the remaining 20% of the budget is intended for the purchase of supplementary materials, which include storybooks, reference books, and teaching aides (See Figure 3).

Figure 3: Capitation Grant Breakdown



**There is no specific percentage dedicated to the purchase of storybooks.**

Head teachers or book committee members ultimately choose to purchase any supplementary materials from the approved list. The extent to which these purchases include storybook varies depending on the individual school.

**Therefore, it is not possible to answer what percentage of the budget is dedicated to storybook distribution;** rather, it is only

possible to examine the percent of the budget dedicated to all types of supplementary materials, which includes teaching aides such as atlases, dictionaries, wall charts, etc.

The 2013-14 total fiscal budget of Rwanda is **RwF 1,653,500,000,000<sup>10</sup>**, of which **RWF 236,000,000,000<sup>11</sup>** is dedicated to the education sector, which is about 14.3% of the overall budget.

Out of the 236,000,000,000, the total budget dedicated to the purchase of supplementary materials for Primary & Secondary levels is **RwF 2,045,000,000<sup>12</sup>**; representing **0.9% of the yearly education budget** and **0.12% of the total fiscal budget**.

**According to the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR)**, “there has been a disappointing fall in the percentage of the total government budget that has been allocated to education, from 19% in 2007 to 16.9% in 2011. Focusing on primary schooling, spending per pupil as a percentage of GDP per capita has fallen from 9% in 2007 to 7.3% in 2011 (IPAR, p.12)”. This decrease in spending for primary schools is partly due to the expansion of the schooling system with funds being redirected to accommodate for the inclusion of lower secondary years (IPAR, p.12).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> MINECOFIN “The National Budget: A Citizen’s Guide 2013-2014” (Kigali, Rwanda, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> According to MINEDUC Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2013-2017, p. 113.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.113.

**What percentage of the annual fiscal education budget is dedicated to storybook distribution in Gicumbi District?**

According to the REB-CPMD Management system, the annual supplementary materials capitation grant for Gicumbi district is **33, 263, 074 RWF**, which is roughly equivalent to **\$48,878**. This amount is calculated based a fixed formula, with incremental changes reflecting increases in school enrolment.

In terms of the annual fiscal budget, **0.002% of the annual fiscal budget** is dedicated to supplementary materials in Gicumbi. Spending on supplementary materials such as storybooks, dictionaries, and atlases is differentiated from spending on primary materials such as textbooks.

**To what extent do current practices support the effective production, procurement, distribution and use of children's books?**

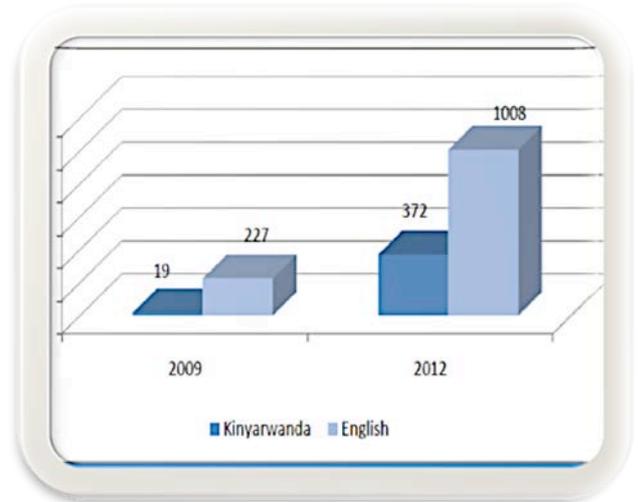
**REB has already implemented various policies to support the effective production, procurement, distribution and use of children's books.** Over the past five years, it has instituted a decentralized instructional materials procurement system whereby schools are able to purchase, using their capitation grant, required instructional materials (including recreational reading materials) from a REB-approved list. This decentralized instructional materials procurement system is hailed as one of the more sophisticated systems in Africa, as it was developed with the intention of eliminating three problems: schools not being able to choose the resources they need; extreme delays and logistical hurdles in getting books to school; MINEDUC's lack of capacity to handle an efficient distribution system, or to develop and print textbooks. It has also laid the framework for highly regulated public tender processes to be conducted.

**When a specific need for instructional materials has not been filled by the end of the regular tender process, an off the shelf purchase is initiated.** This often occurs when new subjects or grade levels are introduced, or when agencies or technical partners request that their materials be deemed appropriate for use in schools. In 2013, L3 successfully made use of this process, by producing, publishing and distributing leveled stories for primary school students which were approved by REB as part of an off the shelf tender.

**In 2012, in order to increase the amount of recreational reading materials available to primary schools, REB issued a tender for publishers to submit recreational reading materials for inclusion on the authorized list.** As part of the tender development process, REB developed, with technical assistance from the Literacy, Language and Learning Initiative (L3), criteria for producing quality books for young children – both teacher and parent read aloud stories and student leveled readers. Prior to 2012, there were 19 Kinyarwanda storybooks on the REB approved list, none of which were appropriate for P1 to P3, and there were 227 English language books.

Figure4: Increase in Titles Approved 2012 Tender

After the 2012 tender, the number of approved Kinyarwanda titles for primary grade levels increased by 1900% to 372. The number of English language storybooks increased by 340% to 1008<sup>13</sup> (See Figure 4).



Once books are approved, public schools nationwide must follow a regulated nine step process to receive storybooks.<sup>14</sup>

1. Head teachers, along with book committees, if they have been established<sup>15</sup>, receive the list of approved materials (See appendix 2).
2. The schools then have two weeks to complete the order form usually in April (See appendix 1).
3. The order forms are sent to the District office, where they are compiled and forwarded to REB.
4. REB aggregates all orders, and reviews quantities to verify whether they are conforming to norms and standards set by MINEDUC.
5. After reviewing orders, REB draws up and signs contracts with publishers who have 4 months to deliver books.
6. Publishers deliver the ordered books to schools.
7. School representatives, usually Head Teachers, checks quantities, reports any missing orders, and sign three copies of a delivery confirmation form, one for each stakeholder.
8. REB enters copies of delivery confirmation forms and enters them into its database.
9. Once all confirmations forms are aggregated, REB calculates and processes payment to publishers. In the event that publishers are unable to deliver books within the delimited 4 months, 0.1% of the total payment is deducted for each day following the deadline.

The system has resulted in a more effective materials selection and distribution process by enabling schools to choose the specific materials they need to support learning.

**To what extent is the current decentralized distribution system resulting in recreational reading materials arriving at the school level as expected?**

**For the most part, the book ordering and distribution system is functioning with little evident leakage occurring nationwide.** Thorough research conducted by Transparency International on Rwanda's public expenditures, a tracking survey of the 9 year

<sup>13</sup> Presentation by Dr. Joyce Musabe, Deputy Director General, REB, at GPE World Literacy Day Celebration in Washington, September 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Source: Interview of Procurement Specialist at REB, March 17th, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> As a result of REB guidance, several schools surveyed established book committees, some of which include parents in addition to teachers.

basic education plan (2012), backs this assertion as “the Ministerial Order (Ministry of Education) provides that the Capitation Grant for each pupil is RWF 875 per quarter (equivalent to RWF 3,500 per year)” and “desk research in 15 selected schools confirmed that there is no leakage between the Capitation Grant provided by the Ministerial order and the amount disbursed by the Ministry of Finance and received by District schools for each pupil (Transparency International, 2012, p. 30)”.

**Schools understand the book ordering process and have largely been able to utilize all of the allocated supplementary materials portion of the capitation grant.** Book committees, who are charged with ordering and maintaining the book collections, exist in many of the surveyed schools. These members demonstrated an understanding of the system and necessary procedures the school must fulfill in order to receive annual book deliveries.

**Prolonged periods of time elapse between ordering of the recreational reading materials and the arrival of the books in schools.** Examining the last couple of years’ procurement records indicates that it has taken up to a year for books to reach schools. Books ordered by schools in April of 2013 and checked by REB in September 2013, still had not arrived at schools by the time consultations took place at the end of February 2014. REB procurement specialists indicated that the 2013 procurement process had been delayed due to ongoing payment negotiations with publishers, signifying the government agency is still in the process of identifying challenges and solutions to the newly introduced decentralized system.

**What efforts are being made by publishers and by REB to increase the quality of books available to schools?**

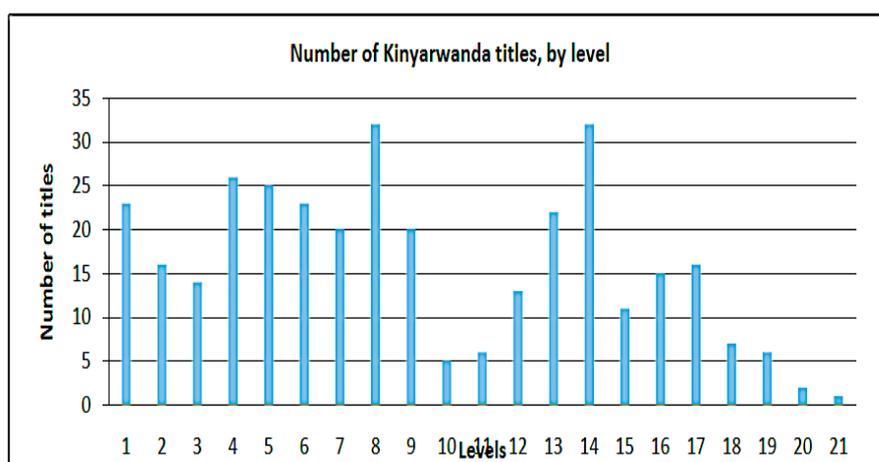
**REB tenders have succeeded in attracting competitive submissions of storybooks by various local, regional and international publishers.** In addition, the introduction of differentiated reading materials during the 2012 tender process allowed room for more submissions.

**In this tender process, publishers were asked to submit two types of materials: teacher read aloud books for each level and language, and student read alone books (or leveled readers) for each level and language.** Each book was analysed as both a “read alone” book as well a “read aloud” book. As the name suggests, teacher read aloud books contain phonics elements and vocabulary too difficult for students to read independently, but when read aloud, are valuable instruments for building vocabulary, comprehension, for modeling fluent reading (including pace and prosody), and for developing children’s interest in books. In read-aloud books, vocabulary and thematic content should be appropriate to the age-level. Student read alone books must contain orthography and phonics elements appropriate for each level and be in alignment with the standards of the national curriculum. Most submissions were “read alone” books, as most publishers are unfamiliar with the read aloud methodology.

**To ensure the appropriateness of each storybook, an exhaustive list of criteria was created and used to evaluate each submission.** As outlined in the quality standards criteria scoring sheet attached in Appendix 3, all books are assessed in consideration to the grade level according to transparent and specified criteria on the basis of cultural relevance, age appropriateness and the extent to which technical specifications are met.

**One of the innovations in the 2012 tender was the development of technical specifications for 21 reading levels** – from beginning to early emergent, to emergent to autonomous reader (See Figure 5). The development of reading levels was done to encourage the production of books for very beginning readers, and for every step along the reading development continuum.

Figure 5: Revised Read Alone Levels



**This was important because the 2009 tender did not result in any books for beginning readers.** No books were submitted for P1 to P3. Once this leveling was implemented, publishers were asked to submit student read aloud books and specify the level the book was targeting. This ultimately resulted in a significant increase of P1-P3 materials.

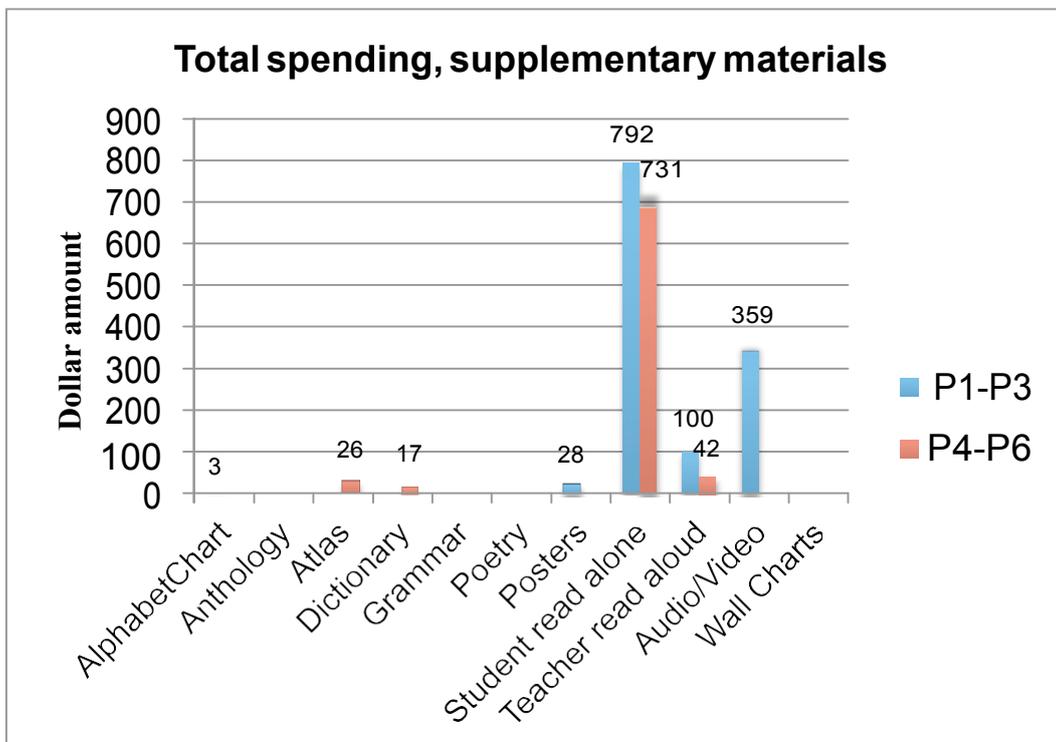
**Although the developments in the tender process resulted in a significant increase in the number of titles available, there is general acknowledgement by the Deputy Director General of REB-CPMD, that these numbers are still insufficient to support the implementation of school-based recreational reading programs.** And although all the titles approved met REB minimal criteria for quality, there was general consensus among REB evaluators that local and regional publishers need technical support to improve the quality of their materials.

Based on an analysis of CPMD data, how have schools in Gicumbi district used the capitation grant to promote recreational reading in schools?

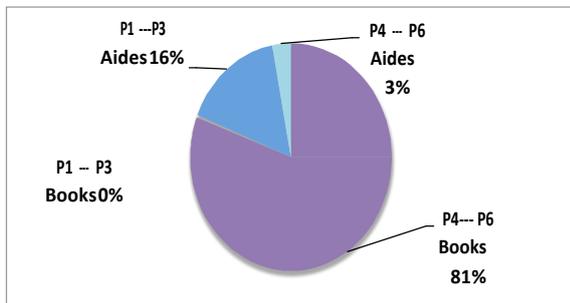
Schools in Gicumbi district used the capitation grants in various different ways depending on the individual institution’s perceived needs and circumstances. Schools took into consideration variables such as prioritized departments within their institutions (pre-primary, primary, secondary), identified shortages in instructional materials, familiarity with titles, preference for publishers, etc.

An analysis across the 11 schools studied indicated that, on average, there was a preference to order read alone books compared to other types of supplementary materials (See Figure 6). Consultations with P1-P3 teachers further evidenced this idea, as they demonstrated the greatest degree of familiarity with the ‘read alone’ or silent reading model of literacy instruction. Teachers noted a preference to purchase class sets of storybooks so that all students could have a copy of the title to read independently, or to facilitate choral or echo reading lessons. The majority of teachers were also not aware of the different instructional purposes that two types of books served (shared reading and independent reading), and as a result, P1-P3 teachers frequently remarked that read aloud texts were too challenging for the pupils.

Figure 6: Surveyed Gicumbi Schools Aggregated Purchases



**To what extent do current practices inhibit the effective use of children’s books?**



**Figure 7 Comparison of Upper and Lower Year Purchases Gacurabwenge School**

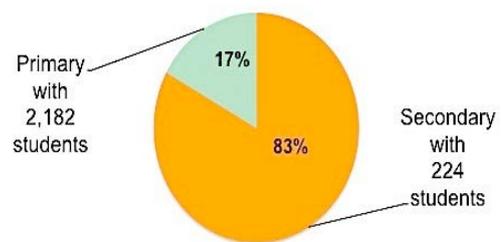
**Allocated funds are disproportionately spent on recreational reading materials for upper rather than lower primary years.** There was an observed tendency in several of the surveyed schools to dedicate a greater portion of the funds on supplementary materials for the P4-P6 levels rather than P1-P3 (See Figure 7). When

interviewed, the staff responsible for placing the orders indicated that students in lower grades

(P1-P3) could not yet read, and therefore would not make ample use of the books. P1-P3 teachers noted that the difficult orthography system characteristic to Kinyarwanda prevents children from being able to read until they have learnt all of the complex consonant blends. According to the rate of phonics introduction specified in the national curriculum, this competency is not achieved until P3. Given that order forms only specify reading levels in two multi-grade categories (P1-P3 or P4-P6), teachers were largely unaware that books were available for early and emergent readers and could be beneficial for literacy development in P1 and P2 classes.

**Expansion of grade levels requires a concentrated procurement of instructional materials for the new classes.**

Several schools consulted had recently expanded to meet the nine-year basic education plan (9YBE). In the Kibali school, the addition of S1-S3 classes lead to teachers ordering supplementary materials for this new cohort, as they had no inventory from previous years to rely upon, whereas younger years could “recycle” their reading materials. In these situations, schools dedicated the majority of the supplementary materials budget to fill these identified gaps (See Figure 8).



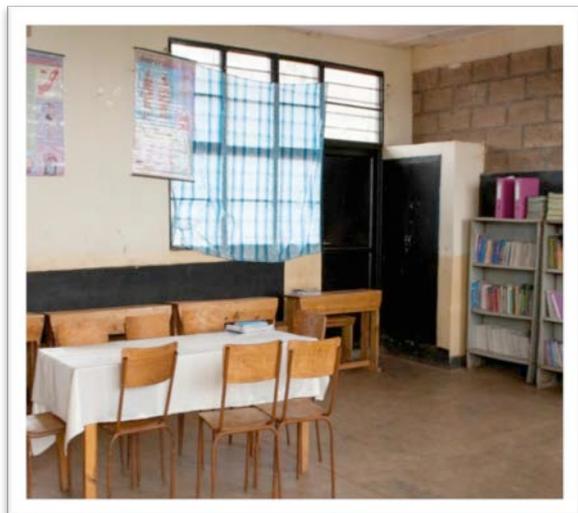
**Figure 8: Impact of School Expansion on Purchases Kibali School**

**Procuring multiple copies of the same storybook results in little variety of titles.** As described earlier, there was a noted trend of teachers preferring to purchase class sets of storybooks in order to provide all students, or every other student with a copy of the text. Byumba EER school bought 50 titles of P1-P3 books, but with an average of 25 copies per book, there were only three distinct titles purchased. When interviewed, teachers communicated the preference to plan for a ‘reading lesson’ in which students would be missing out if there were insufficient copies of the target text. While independent reading is a largely beneficial instructional practice, this ordering trend is problematic in that schools are ultimately procuring very little variety of storybooks. With few original titles, P1-P3 pupils are not afforded sufficient opportunities to engage in regular authentic reading experiences that can allow children to become fluent, autonomous readers.

**The frequency of recreational reading occurring in surveyed classrooms was low.** A portion of interviewed teachers responded that there was little time in the curriculum to teach reading, as all of the lessons are needed in order to cover the mandated content. Other teachers demonstrated a lack of awareness of how or why one would engage in reading instruction. Similarly, several interviewed teachers or administrators indicated that they had sufficient numbers of storybooks and did not see a need for more titles.

Other teachers surveyed indicated that they engaged in reading instruction regularly. However, subsequent interviews with the teacher's pupils indicated that they had had little experience reading or being read to by their teacher. Additionally, observation of the library or storerooms' logbooks indicated little borrowing activity from the interviewed teacher. This suggests a subjectivity bias, or a perceived 'correct' response, is likely to have affected the teacher's interview.

**Storybooks are not regularly available in the classroom.** In all of the surveyed schools, the procured recreational reading materials were stockpiled in libraries or storage rooms. Interviews revealed that teachers and administrators consciously decided to store the books in a central location for easier maintenance. In order to protect the books from damage and theft, the rooms were permanently locked, with only one or two staff members in possession of the keys. Limited access to the storybooks inhibits regular borrowing of books from the teacher for use in the classroom or borrowing of books from the students for use at home.



Photograph 1 Gacurabwenge School Library

One of the schools surveyed had a library in operation, and a rotational system to share books, however these schools only required secondary students to borrow or use books twice a month, while lower years would alternate between going to the library and having art projects once a month. Such an infrequent access to storybooks is not sufficient to build proficiency in reading, and there was no indication on the part of the school administration to increase these visits for lower years or build classroom collections of storybooks.

**What challenges do publishers face in increasing the number of titles available or in increasing the quality of books? What specific policies and conditions stifle greater production of books from publishers?**

**Short lead times affect the quality of publishers' submissions.** Because of the limited time given for publishers to prepare for off the shelf tenders as well as regular tenders, and the poor quality of submissions, the tenders are frequently won by regional and international publishers who have comparable materials already in circulation in other countries, which can be quickly adapted and, if necessary, translated into Kinyarwanda. Another issue publishers have voiced is that of shipping, as shipments take a long time to reach Rwanda, and publishers are fined for every day that their delivery is late. These long distance shipments are an inherent part of the process as local printing costs are prohibitively high, and local printers do not have the capacity to print large quantities of books that fulfill the technical specifications put forth by REB.

**Publishers lack a solid understanding of content and guidelines necessary to produce higher quality storybooks for all levels.** The absence of degree programs in Rwanda to train publishers means that many local and regional publishers do not undergo any formal professional training, and often are not sufficiently knowledgeable about the fundamental elements of varying high quality children's texts. Experienced publishers tend to do well in the tender process, however, even the latter have lamented a lack of clarification.<sup>15</sup> This reflects in regional publishers' submissions of "safe" stories in which the dialogue, layout, or cover are carefully edited to avoid any veto from the evaluation committee, and yet rarely features content that sparks children's curiosity.

**Publishers do not have professional editors on staff who are able to ensure standards of quality.** A lack of highly trained, professional editors causes local and regional publishers to produce materials that do not always meet the standards of international materials. A cadre of professional editors is needed to work with authors and publishing houses to enrich initial productions so that the final product is engaging, interesting, and aligned with the needs and interests of young readers.

**Authentic, locally produced stories are not prioritized in the tender process.** With regional and international publishers, stories generally originate in other countries and are translated into Kinyarwanda. While exposure to other cultures and settings provides rich learning experiences, there is an underrepresentation of storybooks that reflect the lives and experiences of Rwandan children. Surveyed teachers have commented on the irrelevance of some of the storybooks procured, and have identified this as an inhibiting factor to promoting children's meaningful interaction with storybooks.

**What are the current challenges to increasing the amount of reading materials in schools and in the community?**

The REB tender process is an effective tool for dramatically increasing the number of storybooks for primary school students. That said, challenges remain in increasing reading materials in communities.

**The order forms for materials on the approved list does not include information on the specific leveling of read alone books, the type of book (read aloud or read alone) or the theme of books.** Teachers have raised concerns about the lack of information, on the type, level, and content of books during the ordering process.

**The amount of supplementary materials grant is insufficient in terms of creating a rich, literate class environment.** With the current amount of grants provided and the current cost

Level	Kinyarwanda		English	
	Teacher read aloud	Student read alone	Teacher read aloud	Student read alone
P1 - P3	\$2.82	\$1.33	\$3.23	\$1.84
P4 – P6	-	\$1.15	\$3.20	\$2.27

Figure 9: Average Cost of Books on Authorized List

of books (see Figure 9), it would take decades to develop a minimal classroom reading collection comprising of a variety of titles. There needs to be more funds devoted to recreational reading materials, as well as an active push to find less costly materials, or explore new formats such as electronic books, reading

collections as opposed to individual books, and the like, in order to reduce this shortage of storybooks. Electronic books save costs on ink, while reading collections shift the focus from procuring sufficient copies of a single book to a more holistic approach, which aims to provide students with a small but varied sample of genres and reading levels. These reading collections can then be shared among different sections, and if appropriate, different grades.

**There is no policy to support recreational reading programs and justify the purchase and the use of books.** Personal reading must become an important part of the curriculum, and borrowing reading materials, be it from a classroom collection or the school library, must be expected and must become a mandatory part of the formal school curriculum if learners are to develop their reading skills.

**Schools are not provided with any guidelines or guidance on how to balance their recreational reading purchases.** During the ordering process, schools receive the approved list of supplementary materials (see appendix 2) and the order form with the total amount of their budget. There is no other guidance provided on the fact that schools should aim to order read aloud stories as well as leveled readers, that both fiction and nonfiction titles are necessary, and that all grade levels should be taken into account.

**Centralized data on the reading materials acquired outside of the tender process is not included in REB data management systems.** The current REB system documents instructional materials purchased by each school. However, there are no existing records on

books available in schools prior to the introduction of the decentralized system, which were purchased via the “off the shelf” process, or donated by NGOs. The incomplete picture of available resources makes for a difficult assessment of the amount of access and interactions students have with storybooks in government schools.

## V. Recommendations

**How can Save the Children’s programming best take this work forward?**

### A. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

**1. Provide, in partnership with other technical partners, assistance to REB to refine evaluation and ordering processes.** There needs to be a revamping of school order forms, so as to include more information on the types and levels of books available for purchase. Easy-to-understand levels need to be defined and clearly indicated, as for now teachers only see that books are appropriate for either P1-P3 or P4-P6. Specification of levels would also allow schools to make more informed choices – they could prioritize books for P1 and P2, for example. The levels would also allow the creation of grade specific collections – “classroom library in a box” – which would in turn facilitate the implementation of grade specific recreational reading programs.

In particular, the refinement of the leveling process should look to:

- Review the current 21 grade leveling system
- Re-level all approved student read aloud books to ensure conformity with specifications in upcoming tenders
- Revise supplementary order forms to clarify purpose of different reading materials (teacher read aloud, student read alone) and make it easier for schools to make informed choices

**2. Provide, in partnership with REB, technical assistance to local and regional publishers to better understand the criteria of various quality reading materials, specifically, teacher read aloud stories, leveled student readers, and developmentally appropriate nursery school reading materials.** More on-going training on content, and clarification of guidelines is needed to encourage publishers to take more risks and dedicate more time and effort in making appropriately leveled stories that fit the Rwandan context, and are told in a lively, and engaging manner.

### B. POLICY

**1. Collaborate with REB, other donors/technical partners and RLS to establish minimal requirements (number of titles & number of books) for classroom and school reading collections/libraries.** Establish guidelines for schools indicating the amount of storybooks that would be sufficient for a year for any given grade. Review existing titles on MINEDUC/REB list of approved recreational reading materials to determine if quantities are sufficient to support the implementation of personal reading program for all levels of the system.

2. **Once minimal requirements are established, work with REB and other donors/technical partners to identify processes for increasing the number of titles via new tenders, extended timelines for tender submissions or increased funding to purchase materials.** Advocate for provision in school capitation grants of sufficient resources for purchasing of minimal quantities of personal/recreational reading materials to support school-based personal reading programs. Establish, with publishers, minimal timelines required for the production of quality textbooks and recreational materials, and ensure that tenders respect the timelines established, either by announcing tenders earlier on in the year, or introducing a staggered system, whereby tenders would be released up to two years before the books would be needed. When appropriate, advocate for the issuance of new tenders for recreational reading materials to fill identified gaps.
  
3. **Collaborate with REB, other donors/technical partners and RLS to create operational guidelines for school libraries and/or classroom book collections.** Define minimal quality standards for primary school libraries including book storage, borrowing policies, accessibility, book displays and record keeping.

## C. MATERIALS PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES

1. **Work with UNICEF and REB to identify how to expedite the order collection & aggregation process.** The data management systems used by districts and REB are different, which creates a redundancy in processing order forms. If development partners could provide technical assistance to streamline these data systems, the aggregation process would be less time consuming.

## D. CURRICULUM

1. **Work with REB and other technical partners to ensure the new curriculum allocates increased time to the explicit teaching of reading, particularly in early primary, and to the implementation of personal or recreational reading programmes.** Advocate for the new curriculum to:
  - plan for a primary school timetable that allocates a minimal amount of time each week to teaching both of RCBI's target instructional reading practices (shared reading & independent reading)
  
  - provide a rich nursery curriculum that includes the development of foundational pre-reading skills

2. **Be a catalyst for the creation of a technical working group with REB and technical partners to create harmonized teacher trainings on how to use teacher read alouds and student read alone materials in the classroom.** Acceptance of an independent reading approach requires substantial teacher attitudinal change and an adoption of school practices based on different conceptions of reading. To do so teachers must be trained in independent or recreational reading and learn that creating in students a desire to read, to enjoy a good story, and to develop the habit of reading is as important as teaching discrete or foundational reading skills. Teacher learning is most beneficial when its content is consistently reinforced through numerous trainings provided by various technical partners. Therefore, through the creation of a working group, possibly within RENCPC or Rwandan Reads, RCBI could spearhead a standardized, evidence-based training on reading instruction that could be replicated nationwide.

3. **Work with REB and other technical partners to develop coordinated programs (including instruction and written guidelines) to train head teachers and school book committees in how to best select books for annual orders.** Short trainings would ensure that book committee members receive guidance on how to implement school reading programs and how to order recreational reading materials to support such a program. This instruction could be coupled with developed written guidelines, endorsed by REB, on effective ordering and use of recreational reading materials.

## List of Appendices

**Appendix 1: School's Supplementary Materials Order Form**

**Appendix 2: Approved Supplementary Materials List 2013-14 (Sample page)**

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## Appendix 1: School's Supplementary Materials Order Form

4/4/2014

Schools Budgets Printing - REB LTM Management System

### RWANDA SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS ORDER FORM - REB

Order Identification Number	02165-2013-2-D92E0CD6		
School Name	GS BYUMBA CATHOLIQUE	Location	Gicumbi/Byumba/Nyamabuye
School Code	SCH02165	Date	
Name of Head Teacher	MUKABUTERA Cassilde	Name of PTA Chairman	
School Official Stamp		School Supplementary Materials Budget	630,712

Item Number	Grade Level	Type of Material	Publisher	Title	Recommended List Number	Unit Price	Qty	Total Price
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								

All orders should be within your school budget. Any orders which are over budget will automatically be cut to the correct amount. The school will have no decision over which titles are cut

**WARNING:** It is very important that you complete and deliver your order forms for textbooks and supplementary materials to your District Education Office by the deadline you have been given. If your order is received late your school may not get the materials you need this year.

## Appendix 2: Approved Supplementary Materials List 2013-----14 (Sample)<sup>1</sup>

### RECOMMENDED LIST OF SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS FOR USE IN RWANDAN SCHOOLS 2010-2014 (VERSION 2013)

(SRM = Supplementary Reading Book; F = Fiction; NF = Non-Fiction; P = Poetry; PL = Drama; GR = Grammar; WC = Wall Chart; SCWC = Science Wall Chart;

DICTY = Dictionary; AT = Atlas; AN = Anthology; SMTRA= supplementary reading book teacher read aloud , PWC=Posters /wall charts ; AWC=Alphabet wall charts,

PFC=Phonics flash card , VCD , N0001-N0003 = NURSERY READING BOOKS );

NB: \* = conditional approval (see Bid Supervision Committee Minutes for conditions associated with conditional approval,)

Cod e No	Publisher	Title	Recomm ended Grade Level	Langua ge	Descr i ption	Price RwF)
<b>NURSERY (N1-N3)</b>						
N000 1	Fountain	Inyuguti Z'ikinyarwanda-Soft Cover	N1-N3	Kinyar w anda	SRM	442
N000 2	MK	Teta n'inshuti ze	N1-N3	Kinyar w anda	SRM	442
N000 3	Pearson	Iwacu mu rugo	N1-N3	Kinyar w anda	SRM	14,343
<b>LOWER PRIMARY (P1-P3)</b>						
1	COLLINS	Going fast*	P1-P3	English	F	3 847
2	COLLINS	Spines, stings & teeth*	P1-P3	English	F	3 847
3	COLLINS	Marathon*	P1-P3	English	F	3 847
4	COLLINS	How to make story books*	P1-P3	English	F	3 847
5	COLLINS	Fly fact	P1-P3	English	F	3 847
6	COLLINS	MountainMona	P1-P3	English	F	3 847
7	COLLINS	Story boys surprise	P1-P3	English	F	3 847
8	COLLINS	Hector and Cello	P1-P3	English	F	3 847
9	COLLINS	Peter and the wolf	P1-P3	English	F	3 847
10	COLLINS	What is CGI?	P1-P3	English	F	3 847
11	COLLINS	How to make story books*	P1-P3	English	F	3 847

## Appendix 3: REB Criteria for Book Quality<sup>16</sup>

READ ALOUD PICTURE BOOKS, BIG BOOKS FOR SHARED READING (CATEGORIES 1 and 8) **FICTION**

### EVALUATORS' MARK SHEET, Categories 1 and 8 **FICTION**

Level: 0-----3years 3 to 6 years P1 to 3 P4 to P6

**Title** .....

**Evaluator:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

EVALUATION CRITERIA	Not Acceptable 0	Poor 1	Acceptable 2	Good 3	Excellent 4
<b>1. TEXTCONTENT</b>					
1.1 Appropriateness of story/text/theme for the age group					
1.2 Interest level for the age group					
1.3 Appropriateness of length for age group					
<b>2. PRESENTATION</b>					
2.1 Quality, attractiveness and appropriateness of cover age group					
2.2 Appropriateness of, page design & layout for age group ( <i>including placement and amount of text on page</i> )					
2.3 Quality, relevance and appropriateness of illustrations for age group					
2.4 Appropriateness of font & font size for the age group					
2.5 Appropriate and accurate use of color for age group					
<b>3. LANGUAGE</b>					
3.1 Quality of writing					
3.2 Suitability of language use for the age group					
3.3 Appropriateness of language patterns, vocabulary and sentence structure for age group					
<b>4. EDITORIAL</b>					
4.1 Respect of age appropriate conventions and absence of typos and other errors					
<b>5. PROMOTION OF POSITIVE VALUES (FICTION ONLY)</b>					
5.1 Integration of an important social value (equality; gender equality, environment, moral/integrity)					
5.2 Appropriateness of the way in which the social message is addressed for age group a					
5.3 Absence of bias in illustrations, characters and plot					

<sup>16</sup>The standards come from the REB CPMD Standard Bidding Document.

READ ALOUD PICTURE BOOKS, BIG BOOKS FOR SHARED READING and (CATEGORIES 1 and 8) **NON FICTION**

**EVALUATORS' MARK SHEET, Categories 1 and 8 NON FICTION**

Level: 0-----3years 3 to 6 years P1 to 3 P4 to P6

**Title** .....

**Evaluator:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

EVALUATION CRITERIA	Not Acceptable 0	Poor 1	Acceptable 2	Good 3	Excellent 4
<b>1. TEXTCONTENT</b>					
1.1 Appropriateness of story/text/theme for the age group					
1.2 Appropriate interest level for age group					
1.3 Appropriateness of length for age group					
<b>2. PRESENTATION</b>					
2.1 Quality, attractiveness and appropriateness of cover for age group					
2.2 Appropriateness of, page design & layout for age group ( <i>including placement and amount of text on page</i> )					
2.3 Quality, relevance and appropriateness of illustrations for age group					
2.4 Appropriateness of font & font size for the age group					
2.5 Appropriate and accurate use of color for age group					
<b>3. LANGUAGE</b>					
3.1 Quality of writing					
3.3 Suitability of language use for the age group					
3.3 Appropriateness of language patterns, vocabulary and sentence structure for age group					
<b>4. EDITORIAL</b>					
4.1 Respect of age appropriate conventions and absence of typos and other errors					
<b>1. Factual accuracy (NON FICTION ONLY)</b>					
5.1 Facts are accurate and age appropriate					

STUDENT READ ALONE (LEVELLED) BOOKS –

KINYARWANDA & ENGLISH FICTION (CATEGORY 2 and 8)

EVALUATORS’ MARK SHEET, CATEGORY 2 and 8 FICTION

Title .....

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

EVALUATION CRITERIA	Not Acceptable 0	Poor 1	Acceptable 2	Good 3	Excellent 4
<b>1. TEXTCONTENT</b>					
1.1 Appropriateness of story/text/theme for targeted level					
1.2 Appropriateness of story structure for targeted level					
1.3 Appropriateness of length for targeted level					
<b>2. PRESENTATION</b>					
2.1 Appropriateness of, page design & layout for age group <i>(including placement and amount of text on page)</i>					
2.2 Quality, relevance and appropriateness of illustrations for targeted level					
2.3 Appropriateness of font & font size for targeted level					
<b>3. LANGUAGE</b>					
3.1 Appropriateness of language patterns, conventions and sentence structure for targeted level					
3.2 Appropriateness of vocabulary/words for targeted level					
<b>4. EDITORIAL</b>					
4.1 Respect of level-appropriate conventions (absence of typos and other errors)					
<b>5.0 PROMOTION OF POSITIVE VALUES</b>					
<b>5.1 Plot/theme addresses an important social value</b> <i>(equality; gender equality, environment, moral/integrity)</i> in a way that is appropriate for the target audience					
5.2 Appropriateness of the way in which the social message is addressed					
5.3 Absence of bias in illustrations and characters					

STUDENT READ ALONE BOOKS – KINYARWANDA & ENGLISH (CATEGORY 2 and 8) **NON FICTION**

**EVALUATORS' MARK SHEET, CATEGORY 2 AND 8 (NON FICTION)**

**Title** .....

**Evaluator:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

EVALUATION CRITERIA	Not Acceptable 0	Poor 1	Acceptable 2	Good 3	Excellent 4
<b>1. TEXTCONTENT</b>					
1.1 Appropriateness of story/text/theme for targeted level					
1.2 Appropriateness of story structure for targeted level					
1.3 Appropriateness of length for targeted level					
<b>2. PRESENTATION</b>					
2.1 Appropriateness of, page design & layout for age group (including placement and amount of text on page)					
2.2 Quality, relevance and appropriateness of illustrations for targeted level					
2.3 Appropriateness of font & font size for targeted level					
<b>3. LANGUAGE</b>					
3.1 Appropriateness of language patterns, conventions and sentence structure for targeted level					
3.2 Appropriateness of vocabulary/words for targeted level					
<b>4. EDITORIAL</b>					
4.1 Respect of level-appropriate conventions (absence of typos and other errors)					
<b>5.0- Factual accuracy (NON FICTION ONLY)</b>					
5.1 Facts are accurate and age appropriate					