

# UGANDA

## Literacy as a Means of Enhancing Child Rights (Improving Learners' Literacy in Primary Schools through Learner Participation in the Development of Literacy Materials in Uganda)

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### 1 Frame Of Reference

Uganda ratified the Convention on the rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990. There was a commitment to ensure each child receives appropriate nurturing and protection within the frame of the minimum standards set up by the convention. Laws have been put in place to facilitate the implementation of this convention. These include: the 1995 Uganda constitution, Children's Act of 1992 and Children's statute. In order to operationalize the above laws, Uganda introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997, which saw a drastic raise in primary school enrolment exceeding 120%. The overwhelming response to UPE created a plethora of challenges, which have persisted to date and have become a serious concern to almost all primary education stakeholders.

In order to address the challenges which were prevailing, the government of Uganda developed the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) in 1998. The focus of the plan emanated from Uganda's national education vision which is to have "Education as a basic tool for transformation of society, national integration and development" (The Government White Paper on Education Policy review Commission Report 1992) The objectives of ESSP focused on: developing an education system that guarantees a lifelong continuum of knowledge values and attitudes competencies and skills by ensuring scientific and technological orientation of education at all levels. It also focuses on developing the ability to use data and information for decision making, restructuring the education system, making basic education available to

all citizens; use of local languages for instruction, for pedagogic and cultural reasons. It further aimed at enabling individuals to apply their knowledge and energies to contribute to social and economic development of the country among others. The ESSP has been reviewed and a new program to cover the period 2007-2015 was developed and its main objective is to enable pupils in primary schools learn the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and life skills. A Close examination of these objectives reveals that they are in line with the Convention of the Rights of Children (CRC). For example Article 2 which emphasizes Non- discrimination, Article 3 emphasizes in the best interest of the child, Article 6 the right to survive and development, Article 12 participation, the ministry objectives further reflects Government's will and commitment to EFA goals especially goals 1, 2, 3,5 and 6 and the second millennium goal of Achieving Universal primary education. The introduction of UPE has seen the following achievements:

1. Expansion of equitable access to basic education. Increased girls' child's access to basic education. Enrollment of girls' education doubled in primary education. Today P1 to P5 the enrollment of girls is equal to that of boys. The high enrollment is because education has become more affordable. In addition the public is becoming more enlightened about the benefits of educating the girl child. At the moment gender parity at primary level stands at a ratio of 49 girls to 51 boys.
2. The number of trained and qualified teachers has increased steadily at primary level from 81564 in 1996 to 126,000 in 2009. This follows the reforms brought about by the teacher development and management system (TDMS) Program. TDMS provides a net work at grassroots level where classroom teachers receive professional support on a regular basis, through Coordinating Centre Tutors (CCTs) more class rooms, schools and furniture. In 1997 the existing stock of permanent classrooms for primary schools was 45000 but this has kept on growing for example by the end of 203 that figure had risen to 70000.
3. More learning materials have been made available to schools especially text books. In 1997, the pupil: textbook ratio was 37:1. In 2003 the ratio dropped to 3:1 for P.4 and P. 7 classes.
4. Children with special needs are being integrated into the normal schools through an inclusion sector policy; though there is still a challenge of special needs teachers.
5. Expansions of non formal education (NFE) Programs for disadvantaged children who cannot access education in formal schools have been introduced in different areas.

In spite of these achievements the quality of primary education is still constrained by the following:

1. large classes especially in the lower Primary one to Primary three classes
2. inadequate reading materials,
3. teachers not competent enough to teach reading and writing,
4. limited use of participatory methods in teaching and learning process,
5. limited creativity to use the environment and
6. Intense poor reading culture.

These challenges in turn do negatively impact on the implementation of CRCs in Uganda.

In order to address some of the above challenges a variety of initiatives have been introduced in primary schools to address the rights of children. For example:

1. Introduction of thematic curriculum and use of local language as a medium of instruction from Primary one to Primary three, development of a competency based curriculum for upper primary classes respond to meaningful participation of children in their learning.
2. Banning of corporal punishment and providing alternative ways of disciplining children, and creating learner friendly schools respond to the protection of children while at school and home.
3. Construction of classrooms, provision of test books, furniture, qualified teachers, SNE, NFE and Girls' education programs respond to provision of education for all.
4. Quality Enhancement Initiative (QEI) that addresses quality concerns of pupils, teacher, school management and community participation responds to Provision, Participation and Protection (3Ps).

Despite the above initiatives, there are still issues of provision and participation which need to be addressed both at teacher training institutions and primary school level if quality education is to be achieved by all. In many of the primary schools teachers still find a problem in using child centered approaches in the teaching learning process. Limited number of reading materials contributes to low acquisition of literacy.

It's against this background that a project *Literacy as a means of enhancing Child rights (Improving learners' literacy in Primary Schools through learner participation in the development of literacy materials in Uganda)* was carried out in one Teachers' training College and two Primary schools as a way of responding to the quality issues stated above.

## 2 Purpose

The purpose of this project was to create a sustainable system where students/pupils will participate in making reading materials and using participatory methodologies in the teaching learning process. The study/project pivoted on the assumption that “When reading skills are improved, academic, social and economic achievement also improves which in turn improves and enhance child rights in Uganda.

### Improving Learners Literacy in Primary Schools through Learner Participation in Development of Literacy Materials

#### Study frame work and the Conceptualization of Literacy, CRCs and Child Centered Pedagogy in Uganda

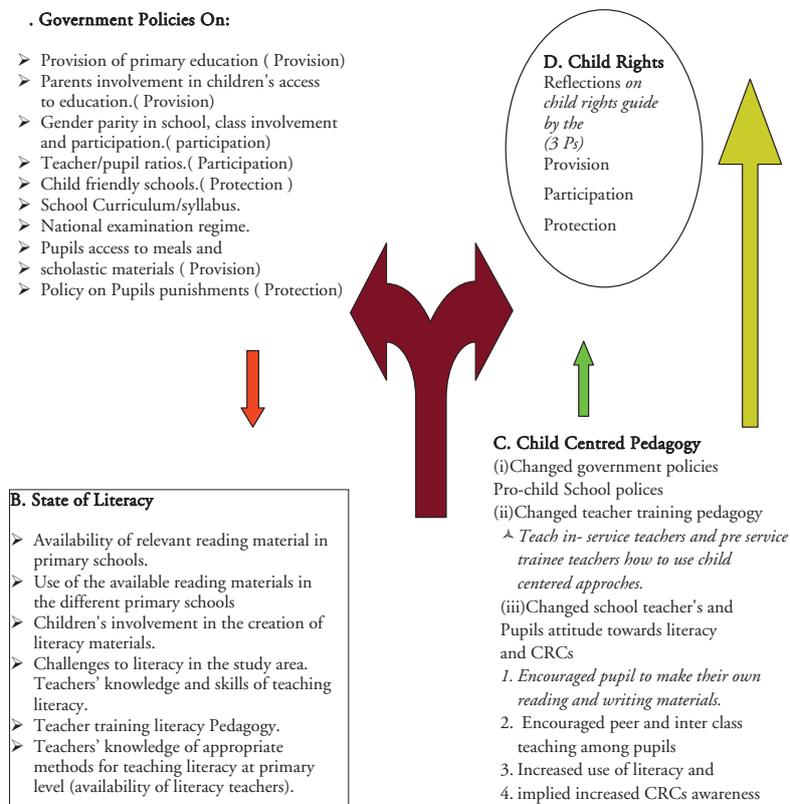


Figure 1: Understanding factors which impact literacy and the implied CRCs in the study area.

The frame work under pins the fact that institutionalisation of child centred approaches in the Teaching and Learning of reading and writing in Primary schools improves education standards. The conceptual framework comprises of four parts numbered as ABCDE. Part A revealed the government role in the provision and inception of policies which enhance provision of education, B gives the state of literacy and the linkage with government policies, C provides the remedy to the constrained government policies and state of literacy while D is the final state of a refined CRC compliant education system and society where reading and writing are the norm. E which is on top of the model directs the institutionalisation of child centred approaches in the teaching and Learning of reading and writing in Primary school that is a state where all the stakeholders namely the pupils, teachers, tutors, parents and government are involved in child literacy pedagogies which in turn it is assumed will build a child rights friendly school and society.

### **Study and Project Geographical Scope**

The study /Project was conducted in Uganda in the districts of Luwero and Nakaseke. One school from each district was sampled to represent the primary schools while Nakaseke PTC was selected to represent the teacher training institutions.

### **3 Study Methodology**

The study/project team used the following methods

#### **Meetings**

Preliminary meetings were held with the District Education officials of Luweero and Nakaseke and the Principal of Nakaseke PTC. The purpose of the meetings was to introduce the concept of the project, share views and experiences with the officials and in the case of the districts agree on the study schools.

#### **Interviews**

Interviews were held with teachers, school administrators and pupils. The interview guides used are included in Appendix one.

#### **Focus group discussions**

These were held with the head teachers and teachers of the two primary schools, the principal, the tutors and the students of Nakaseke PTC. The purpose of the discussions was to carry out a situational analysis of the teaching of reading and writing

(Literacy) at the two schools and how pre-service teacher trainees are trained to teach reading and writing at Nakaseke PTC.

### **Observation**

Observation of the school infrastructure, classroom teaching, classroom environment, available teaching/learning materials at the two schools and PTC was carried out as part of the situational analysis.

### **Tests**

Pre-tests in reading and writing (Literacy) were administered to a sample of 40 pupils in each of the classes of primary two, three, five and six. The test for primary two was given in the local language (Luganda) to fit in the language policy of medium of instruction in primary schools. The aim of the pre-tests was to establish the literacy levels of the pupils. Appendix 2 carries the sample tests.

### **Training workshops**

The following trainings were carried out

- Using child centred approaches (pedagogy) in the teaching of literacy in relation to CRCs
- Equipping pupils/students with skills of making reading materials
- Using student made materials in the teaching/learning process

### **Exhibitions**

Exhibitions at school and college level were made and exchange visits were carried out where pupils/student teachers/primary teachers and tutors learnt from each other

### **Dialogues**

Dialogues were carried out with the parents of the two primary schools. Discussions were centered on parent involvement in their children's learning and how they can support their schools in providing materials for reading material development

## **4 Results of the Study**

### **A. From Situational Analysis**

In February 2011, the change agents carried out a situational analysis on the teaching and writing in the two primary schools and Nakaseke PTC. Using interviews, focus group discussions, observations and pre-tests in reading and writing, the following conclusions were made based on five dimensions namely;

- I. General observations
- II. Teacher based issues

- III. Pupil based issues
- IV. State of school infrastructure
- V. College based issues

### General Observations

- Teachers were aware of the need to involve learners actively during the teaching/learning process but lacked the basic skills, were demotivated and sometimes the number of pupils in each class was too big to manage.
- Apart from text books which were mainly in P.5 and P.6, there were very few reading materials which the pupils could read. Even the text books in the 2 classes were only used during class time.
- There were no class libraries and reading corners, books were kept in a store where pupils could not easily access them.
- Teachers at both schools revealed that pupils' literacy levels was low and teachers had a problem in using appropriate methods of teaching reading in English and in the local language.
- Local materials were available but were not being used by teachers and learners
- Some classes were too large for teachers to manage
- Parent involvement in school activities was limited

### Teacher Based Issues

- Majority of teachers had little knowledge about the methods of teaching reading
- Literacy is timetabled in primary 1, 2 and 3 only and does not appear in Upper Classes.
- Teachers did not have time to make reading materials locally
- Teachers lacked skills of teaching English as a second language
- There was no evidence of records of any organized system of borrowing books to learners.
- Teachers handled big class sizes compared to the official teacher – pupil ratio of 50:1 as indicated below:

Class	Kiziba Primary School	Katikamu Primary School
P2	96	40
P3	100	40
P5	105	61
P6	80	68

### **Pupils Based Issues**

- From the observation and face to face interviews with randomly sampled pupils, the following were revealed:
- Pupils read from textbooks with a salient aim for passing a set text or examination in Upper classes (P5 and P6)
- Children could not read well, so this affected their performance at all levels of learning in all subjects.
- The pupil book ratio was 1:20 on average in upper classes and in P2 and P3 it was 1:30
- Pupils expressed a desire to read stories for leisure but such books were very few in the schools.

### **State of School Infrastructure**

- Both schools had permanent classrooms
- Both schools were not fenced which implies that community members could trespass anytime they felt like and this posed a challenge of security of materials
- There were no rooms designated as libraries, not even a store, the few books available were kept in cupboards in the Head teacher and Deputy Head teacher's office
- There were no cupboards in the classes where reading materials could be kept.

### **College Based issues (Nakaseke PTC)**

- At the PTC the following were revealed
- PTC trainee teachers knew their rights but could not explain the responsibilities that go with particular rights
- They had the desire to be taught how to write books but this seemed not to be catered for in the college program/time table
- They were required to have teaching learning materials for reading but did not know how to develop the books and other materials. They said tutors told them to develop materials but lacked the skills of developing them.
- Student teachers thought reading could only be taught during the English lessons. When asked how to teach reading using other subjects they felt it was not possible.

The pre-tests in reading were given to the pupils in the month of April, 2011 and the following is the summary of the results:

- 50% of the learners in P2 were able to read and comprehend in local language. In P3 45% were able to answer the questions correctly. 62% of the P5 learners had the ability to read orally but many could not write correct sentences. Majority of learners do not know how to use correct punctuations. Appendix 2 carries the sample tests.

## **B. Development of Reading Materials**

The change agents trained the teachers of the primary schools and the tutors of Nakaseke PTC. This was done in the months of April and May 2011. They were trained on the techniques of developing literacy materials for pupils, how the student teachers can use locally available materials to develop reading materials for different classes in the primary schools. The pictures below show some of the training sessions.

After training the tutors and teachers, they in turn trained the students and the following results were achieved. These are going to be discussed separately at primary school level and at PTC level.

### **Primary school level**

Pupils were able to identify ways in which they can participate in their learning. Pupils of primary five and six started making materials. These included;

- Single letters written on cards for word building
- Single words written on flash cards for individual reading
- Sentences written on strip papers
- Story books
- Picture books

These materials were graded by the teachers and were given to teachers of primary two and three to use them while teaching reading and writing. Some materials were retained in the primary five and six. Each class set up a class library. The pictures below show some of the materials that were developed by the pupils.

### **At college level**

At the college, students were assigned to personal tutors. Each tutor was in charge of about 20 students. After the initial training of the students on how to develop reading materials, time was allocated on the timetable where students met with their personal tutors. These carried out routine coaching and mentoring of the students and edited their work. The pictures below show some of the sessions when personal tutors were coaching and mentoring students

A variety of teaching/learning materials were developed by the students. Below are some pictures of reading materials.

## **C. Child Centred Pedagogy**

The change agents further trained the primary school teachers on child centred pedagogy. This included training on the methods of teaching reading, how to use group

work and child to child approach. Demonstration lessons by the teachers were carried out and procedures used were discussed by all teachers. As a result, teachers became more confident in teaching reading and writing as revealed from the evaluation of the training workshops when one teacher stated that, "In one week, I have learnt what I failed to learn while at college." (One primary two teacher of Kiziba primary school 2011)

After a variety of reading materials were developed by the pupils and students, they were distributed to the classes of P.2, P.3, P.5 and P.6. The teachers of P.2 and P.3 identified children who were weak in reading and these were paired with pupils from P.5 and P.6 who helped them in reading during the literacy hour which was included on the timetable. The end of the year results of the pupils in the sample classes showed a tremendous improvement, not only in literacy, but in all subjects.

#### **D. Exhibitions**

Two exhibitions were staged at Nakaseke PTC, one in the month of August 2011 and another in November 2011. During the exhibition, the students explained how they made the teaching/learning material and how it can be used in the classroom. During both exhibitions, the teachers from the sample schools were invited to learn and share with the student teachers. They brought along a few pupils from primary five and six. Everybody learnt from the interactions that were held.

The two primary schools also staged exhibitions in the month of October 2011 and invited members of the school management committee and parents. Parents were excited when they saw the work made by their children. They promised to contribute materials such as markers, crayons, coloured pencils, pictures, paper boxes and any other material which could be used to develop reading materials. They also promised to provide time for their children at home to do homework and read the booklets/cards borrowed from the class library.

#### **Discussion of the Results and Reflections**

Like other studies anchored on the Lund University Child rights international training (Wickenberg et al 2009) the study has had a number of successes and challenges. The successes of the study and project pivots on its many implicit and explicit benefits for example its ability to cover the literacy vacuum in most primary schools, introducing a new culture in teacher-training pedagogy of institutionalizing use of learner centered pedagogy and generation of locally made child literacy materials. It has tried to provide a bridge to the gap in the three PS (provision, participation and protection.)

The project has revealed that reading and writing are still a challenge to the theory and practice of child rights in Uganda. The literacy rates are 55.6 and 30.7% for male and females respectively. This is more challenging for rural areas in Ugandan

where the literacy on average is far below 20% for females and 30% for males. It is very hard for such a population to read and understand government policies, medical prescriptions and other documents which are of direct benefit to them. In many cases where teachers have the good will to play a positive role they are constrained by inadequate and in most cases with very thin presence of resources in their schools. The project through the Institutionalization of child centered approaches in the Teaching and Learning of writing and reading in Primary schools tried to initiate a literacy culture as a pivot for participation, provision and protection of the child in their learning and teaching contexts.

The study project has tried to provide a ground on which schools can achieve the 3Ps using child centered approaches. The different stakeholder namely Nakaseke student teachers, pupils in the study schools as well as head teachers and teachers revealed that many of the child produced literacy materials could be sold out to other schools for re-use or for use by pupils to replicate for their own use. The money got for many of the pupils could be used to get other scholastic materials thus addressing the challenge of provision. On the other hand the issue of protection was addressed by the many stories generated by the pupils. These stories gave insights on pupil and community health education, personal and community hygiene, futility of corporal punishments, child defilement and primary school internal efficiency. On the other hand, the project addressed issues of participation by teaching both the teachers, tutors that pupils can actively generate and use their own made materials. This was done through peer teaching and interclass generation of literacy materials. The project led to the creation of class libraries in all the study schools. This apart from enhancing literacy it made the pupils feel that it is their personal library since they participated in its creation. It also led to creation of reading and writing clubs to instill a culture of writing and reading.

These workshops enabled the project to achieve the medium and other partial goals of the project. Teachers were able to adopt, appropriate use of child centered approaches during peer demonstration lessons, encouraged learners to generate and use their own or peer generated literacy materials.

Post exhibition and work shop visit to the study schools revealed that even without anticipating for external assistance and inspection both the teachers and pupils continued to generate and use the literacy materials.

Below are citations of comments from teachers, parents, tutors and the principal of Nakaseke PTC arising from the different activities carried out in the study on which the team drew lessons learnt.

*“This training has taught me to realize that we do not need money or very expensive materials to make teaching and learning materials. What we need is creativity.”*(Statement made by a male tutor after a material generating workshop Nakaseke September 2011)

*“I am very surprised that we can make very excellent teaching and reading materials without out spending significant amounts of money and time. I thought that my pupils cannot make any good teaching materials on their own”* (Tutor from Nakaseke PTC October).

*My son has become more pre-occupied with his studies since each day he has to make something new, some of which are used by his siblings* (parent interviewed Katikamu Literacy material exhibition).

*“Since my daughter started making the reading materials at home she uses them to teach her younger brother and sister. They took have begun reading even before they access school. This is a great achievement for our area.”* (One of the female parents commenting on the usefulness of the project in Katikamu Primary school)

*“This exhibition has shown that our children are not as hopeless as many people tend to make us believe. They are equally good like other children but I think lack guidance. If told what to do they can do it very perfectly. The stories we are reading here are the not only interesting to read but they are very educative on how the girl child should protect himself and how we should treat our children well. I am greatly impressed and promise my support for this great innovation.”* (Speech by Chair person school management committee during the literacy material exhibition October 2011)

*“It is very easy to enhance CRCs if the stories about them are made by the children themselves. The exhibition does not only enhance literacy but it highlights key issues affecting our community namely; child abuse, infidelity, HIV/AIDS, poverty, corruption, defilement, child labour among others”.*( Speech by the Roman catholic Priest in charge of Schools in Katikamu Catholic Parish Luwero Catholic Diocese November, 2011)

### **Lessons learnt**

The salient observation made by team members and all stakeholders was the fact that girls were more involved in peer teaching, generation of literacy materials. This implies that the project may have another positive effect of enhancing girl child literacy and its implied impact on CRCs.

Team members learnt that:

- If a change project is to support and improve learners performance as a major concern for all stakeholders it is very easy to implement because everybody is willing to participate.
- Involvement of parents in matters concerning their children’s learning is not a hard task but it is not thought of very quickly by schools.
- Parents can ably provide materials for their children’s learning if put in the know.

Though the project has been successful in as far as the CRCs are concerned there still some challenges which need addressing these include;

1. Rural and peri-urban poverty
2. School dropout rate is very high at all levels especially in upper primary
3. Teacher attrition rate is very high especially for rural schools which affect innovations and pedagogical consistency
4. Certain cultural practices which constrain child school attendance for example early girl child marriages,
5. Encouragement of corporal punishments by the parents and the community
6. The examination regime and system encourages teacher centered pedagogy
7. Though the district and other community officials appreciated the usefulness of the project many of them are not very keen to get involved especially in expanding it because they don't see direct monetary benefits
8. The pedagogical environment is still very poor. Most classrooms are poorly ventilated, with dilapidated roofs and is life threatening for the teachers and children especially in the rainy season.
9. Children still stay at school the whole day without lunch.
10. While other children especially those with working parents complained that their parents are too busy to talk with them so many parents do not understand their children.

### **Conclusion and the Way Forward**

Change is not a one day act but a process. The project has made the first move to link literacy with child rights. The project draws from experiences and knowledge of child rights education given by Lund University sponsored by SIDA. The study and project was able to identify the challenges of literacy as an anchor to child centered education in Uganda. It provided the ground for improving learners' literacy in Primary Schools through learner participation in the development of literacy materials. It has initiated both peer centered pedagogy and self motivated pedagogy.

Given the absence of direct monetary motivation for the teachers and learners, it is hoped that by institutionalizing child centered approaches in the teaching and literacy learning and in Teacher training pedagogy, teachers will apply it in their practice. There will be continued need to lobby the Ministry of Education and Sports Uganda (MoES Ug) to adopt this practice and turn it into a policy. It is also hoped that this project will be adopted by NGOs which in most cases are the key financiers of literacy material development in Uganda.



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## Appendices

### Appendix One

#### Interview Guides

##### Interview guide questions for teachers and School administrators

1. What is your education level?
2. Are you involved in the teaching of reading and writing?
3. How often do you teach your pupils how to write and read?
4. Are you comfortable with teaching your pupils how to read and write in the pupils' Mother tongue?
5. Have you ever headed of CRC?
6. What are they?
7. How do you motivate your pupils to actively participate in their learning?
8. What is the pupil –book ratio?
9. Do you have a school Library?
10. Do pupils use it?

##### Interview guide questions for pupils

1. What is your name?
2. What do you enjoy most at schools?
3. Who teaches you how to read and write?
4. How often do you use the school library?
5. Do you teachers encourage you to develop your own learning materials?



1. Arrange the letters correctly to make sensible words

(a) mna            (b) dgo            (c) hraic            (d) sscla            (e) peincl

2. Fill in the missing letters

(a) ho\_pital            (b) sc\_ool            (c) ta\_ble            (d) te\_cher            (e) d\_or

3. Circle the word which is different

a) chair            able            stool            plate  
b) pawpaw            cassava            orange            mango  
c) dress            skirt            blouse            shoes

4. Arrange the words to make good sentences

Example: is Jane this three year in primary  
Jane is in primary three this year

a) goes work every day to man the  
b) book a Musa reading is  
c) playing The with baby is ball a

5. Read the following story and answer the questions

Mr. Musoke is a farmer. He grows crops and also keeps animals. He grows crops like bananas, sweet potatoes, maize and beans. He keeps cows, goats, sheep, rabbits and dogs. He sells the milk from the cows and uses the money to look after his family. The dog helps to guard the home when he is away from home.

Answer the questions below;

1. What is the work of Mr. Musoke?
2. Write the different crops Mr. Musoke grows?
3. Which animals does Mr. Musoke keep?

**Primary 5 - reading test**  
**Reading test**

1. Write capital letters where they should be used.

Last Monday i went to wobulenzi. i saw my friend eva. she gave me three mangoes and one pineapple. i put them in the basket and took them home. my mother and father were very happy. each one of us ate one mango

2. Choose the correct word from the brackets to fill the gap.

- a) She.....her finger with a razor blade (cut, cat)
- b) My mother's .....is long and black (hair, hare)
- c) The President had a big .....on his head (hat, hut)

3. Arrange these sentences to make a good story. Then write the story.

- a) The doctor checked her
- b) She did not eat her supper
- c) Yesterday mother was not feeling well

4. Write meaningful sentences using these words

- a) doctor
- b) policeman
- c) teacher

**Reading the story and answer the questions in full sentences.**

Mr. Kagoda is a carpenter. He built his workshop near his home. In the workshop he keeps all his tools. He has a very big table which he calls his work bench. Besides it, there is a shelf where all tools such as nails, hammer, screws and saws are kept. Mr. Kagoda's house is near the main road so that people may see his workshop.

Many passers- by make orders for new chairs, beds and other furniture.

Mr. Kagoda is one of the best carpenters in that trading centre. Mr. Kagoda is always bussy. Durring holidays he works with his two children.

- 1. Where is Mr. Kagoda's workshop?
- 2. Where does he keep his tools?
- 3. Write three things found in Mr. Kagoda's workshop?
- 4. Why is Mr. Kagoda's house near the main road?
- 5. Who helps Mr. Kagoda in his workshop?

Primary six - reading test

1. Put a circle around small letters which should have been capital.

yestearday was out sports day in the district. ten schools participated in the competition. our school, kiziba primary school came first, katikamu kisule was second adn wobulenzi parents came third. the best pupils in 200 metre race whre musisis adolf and nabweteme rose.

2. Arrange these sentences to make a good story. Then write the story.

- a) One day early in the morning they all went out to look for food.
- b) It came out very first and took one chick
- c) Mother hen had seven chicks.
- d) When they were tired, they all rested under a big tree.

3. Complete the sentences below with the correct word or words.

- a) He was climbing a tree and he ..... down
- b) What is the ..... hospital I can reach on foot.
- c) You will..... riding until you see the sign post on your right

4. Make sentences using these words

- (a) mountain      (b) library      (c) playground      (d) wedding

5. Read the passage and answer the questions that follow

Chameleons are small animals but very clever ones. They live in trees and bushes and feed on insects. They have long sticky tongues. When an insect comes near them their tongue shoots and catches the insect.

Chameleons have big round eyes and their eyes can look an two directions at once. One eye can look infront at the same time when the other is looking behind.

The most interesting thing about chameleons is that they change their colour. If the chameleon is on a green leaf, its colour will be green. If it moves to a brown piece of wood or dry leaf, its colour will turn brown. This helps chameleons to protect themselves from their enemies. Chameleons always take the colour of the environment where they are.