

10.	Reading Tent (RT I (Books), RT II (IT))
Discipline of Study:	Literacy Development
Principal Investigator:	M. Makenzi
Site:	Egerton/Laikipia
Funding Agent:	Rockefeller
Duration:	1999-2002
Amount:	\$125,000

Abstract

This is a University library's outreach programme whose main objective is to promote reading and literacy by inculcating a lifetime reading culture. The project started in November 1999. It has four main approaches namely: A project library/I.T lab; Reading hour/I.T sessions in schools; Mobile reading unit; Reading/literacy workshops and seminars for teachers. Other programmes that are conducted under the project are:

- *National book week activities at the Egerton University centre;*
- *Reading/I.T vacational camp;*
- *Local Council of the International Reading Association (IRA)*

The project targeted ten schools with a total population of 1567 (one thousand and five hundred and sixty seven pupils). Through its other programmes, the project is able to reach many more children. Through the project children are trained to begin appreciating the long reading road ahead of them and are prepared to face the challenges of Information Technology (IT).

Major Findings

- Reading is the foundation to good academic performance
- Most of the schools do not have organized libraries;

- Pressure from the syllabus allows no time for leisure reading in schools;
- Schools lack story books for leisure and whenever funds are available to purchase books, many schools mostly go for text books;
- Due to the emphasis placed on passing of examinations, teachers prefer to use all the available time to drill pupils to excel in their subject areas;
- Most of the teacher lack skill in 'teaching of reading'.

Recommendations

- There should be a policy on establishment and maintenance of libraries in schools;
- Teacher training curriculum should have a component on 'teaching of reading skills';
- Funds from the Government for the purchase of books should be used to buy both text and story books;
- The school curriculum should allow for 'library/reading time.