

**THE IMPACT OF READING ROOMS ON LITERACY  
DEVELOPMENT: A CASE OF SELECTED BASIC SCHOOLS IN  
CHONGWE DISTRICT.**

**BY**

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA**

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## DECLARATION

I, Chisenga Caroline, do hereby solemnly declare that this piece of work represents my own, and that all the works of other persons have been duly acknowledged, and that this work has not been previously presented for any degree at this and indeed at any other University for similar purposes.

Name..... CHISENGA CAROLINE .....

Signed..... C. Chisenga ..... Date..... 16.07.2013 .....

### CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation by CHISENGA CAROLINE is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of degree of Master of Education in Literacy and Learning.

Signed.....*B. Mafai*.....Date.....*12/07/13*.....

Signed.....*AB*.....Date.....*12/07/13*.....

Signed.....*SR*.....Date.....*15/07/13*.....

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study sought to evaluate the impact of the Reading Rooms on literacy development among basic school pupils. It targeted pupils from rural schools of Chongwe District, Lusaka Province. A sample of 210 respondents comprising of 4 Ministry of Education officials, 12 Head teachers, 4 librarians, 40 teachers and 150 pupils were purposively and randomly selected from the research site. In order to provide accurate results, the researcher adopted a mixed (triangulation) approach and employed both quantitative and qualitative research designs. Data were collected using open-ended questionnaires and interview guides. The data collection exercise was undertaken over a period of six weeks. The actual procedure began by seeking authority from the District Education Board Secretary (DEBs) to conduct interviews with some officials at his office and carry out research in selected basic schools in the District.

In order to achieve the study objectives, interviews with District Education Board Officials and trained school librarians were conducted to solicit information on the Reading Rooms. During interviews, the responses to the questions were written down by the researcher as the interviewees gave their views. Tests (literacy skills) were also administered to one set of pupils in schools with Reading Rooms and another set of pupils in a school that was similar in all respects apart from a Reading Room; i.e. the control group. The difference in scores was taken to mean the impact of the Reading Rooms. Both qualitative and quantitative data analyses were employed. Descriptive data were analysed through thematic approach where it was categorized, tabulated and arranged under themes and sub-themes. Quantitative data were analysed using the Social Package for the Social Sciences Software (SPSS) and interpreted as percentages and graphs.

The findings unveiled the fact that school Reading Rooms had a positive impact on literacy. The findings showed that the school Reading Rooms provided a literate environment for the pupils. The study also revealed that the pupils had developed a positive attitude towards reading. Regarding performance of the pupils, it was adduced that from the inception of the Reading Rooms in 2008, pupil's performance in the schools with Reading Rooms had improved tremendously compared to those in schools without. The difference between the two groups was statistically significant. According to the study findings, pupils on the Reading Room literacy program outperformed the control group that had no Reading Room in the tests administered. The study also revealed that school librarians collaborated with teachers in helping pupils improve their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Majority respondents said the Reading Rooms supported classroom activity and provided supplementary reading materials.

Furthermore, the study revealed that the school Reading Room literacy events/ activities were meaningful, relevant and purposeful because they enabled pupils discover the joy of reading and writing.

The following recommendations were made basing on the findings:

Firstly, the government through the Ministry of Education should construct more school libraries in already existing structures especially in the rural parts of the country. Secondly, the Zambian situation calls for more funding of school libraries by the Government. Lastly, more librarians must be trained by the Zambia Library Service in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.

## **List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

<b>DEBS</b>	: District Education Board Secretary
<b>MOE</b>	: Ministry of Education
<b>MOU</b>	: Memorandum of Understanding
<b>PEO</b>	: Provincial Education Officer
<b>PRP</b>	: Primary Reading Program
<b>PTA</b>	: Parent Teachers Association
<b>RR</b>	: Reading Room(s)
<b>RtRZM</b>	: Room to Read Zambia
<b>SR</b>	: School Room
<b>UNESCO</b>	: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>EFA</b>	: Education For All

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Overview

All over the world libraries are dedicated to providing free, fee-paying and equitable access to information for all, be it in written, electronic or audiovisual form. They play a key role in creating literate environments and promoting literacy by offering relevant and attractive reading materials for all ages and all literacy levels. They embrace the social responsibility to offer services that bridge social, political and economic barriers, and traditionally make a special effort to extend their services to marginalized people. Librarians assist in finding, using and interpreting appropriate information that opens up opportunities for lifelong learning, literacy enhancement, informed citizenship, recreation, creative imagination, individual research, critical thinking, and ultimately, empowerment in an increasingly complex world (Krolak, 2005).

School libraries are an integral part of the institutions they serve. As a storehouse of information or a record of human experience to which students, academic faculties, and researchers may turn for data or information, the library stands in the same relationship to the society as the memory to an individual by making available and accessible to its users information resources needed for teaching and for students' independent study. By offering instruction in the use of library and bibliographical resources, the library participates in the transmission of knowledge. Librarians play a central role of critical importance in the instructional and scholarly life of the schools they serve (Aguolu, 1983).

Whilst education is being given a high priority by the government of Zambia, and while educational opportunities for young people are rapidly expanding, the fact remains that most schools in the country do not have libraries (Lungu, 1984; 1990). At the same time, while in

recent years the Zambia Library Service has continued to expand its services, most rural areas are lacking library services.

In an effort to improve literacy among basic school children in rural Zambia, Room to Read Zambia has established 195 Reading Rooms. However, the role of these Reading Rooms in promoting literacy is not known because no study has been conducted to specifically look at their impact on literacy development. This chapter shall explore the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study, definition of terms and the conceptual framework.

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Chongwe's geography varies and is mainly made up of hills. Chongwe has 66 schools, most of them lying along the trans-eastern highway which is the only tarred road in the District. Room to Read currently focuses its efforts in Cambodia, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Vietnam and Zambia. The literacy program principally aims at establishing school libraries. The program creates and fosters partnerships with the communities that share the goal of increasing the educational opportunities available to all children. The Reading Room Program provides schools and community centres with books and other learning materials, trains teachers and librarians, and works with schools to create time in their schedules for library and reading periods (Room to Read Zambia, 2008).

Room to Read Zambia started supplying thousands of children with enhanced educational resources and infrastructure in 2007. The Zambian team partners with communities to address their specific educational needs through the Reading Room, School Room and Girls' Education programs. So far, the Room to Read program has established 195 libraries. Room to Read believes that the habit of reading and literacy are essential to the educational success of children.

Prior to the implementation of the Reading Rooms in Chongwe, Room to Read Zambia conducted a baseline survey in 2008. The findings revealed a school situation of inadequate and/limited classroom space, large class sizes, double session arrangements, inadequate and/or absence of basic furniture in classrooms and insecure classrooms. It also adduced that there was erratic access to few books. The Baseline Survey indicated 650 books for 8591 scholars in 12 schools in the district that was far below the recommended number of books. Libraries in the classical and formal sense did not exist in schools. In the absence of Libraries, books were stored in offices and taken to classes in boxes/bags for use during the literacy hour and as time filler. No organization provided full-fledged reading programmatic support to schools. This explains the reason why there was little knowledge on Libraries and Library training (Room to Read Zambia, 2008).

Another challenge was illiteracy in the lower grades. Out of 36 pupils, 17% indicated that they did not know how to read. Pupils read very little in Chongwe District Schools mainly due to non-availability of story books and absence of libraries in the formal and classical sense. The Primary Reading Program (PRP) was the main reading program in schools in Chongwe though it was greatly hampered by inconsistent supply/replenishment of reading kits. The Reading Rooms Literacy Program started as an intervention mechanism to enable pupil's access print materials, motivate librarians and teachers and establish child-friendly libraries in primary and secondary schools (Room to Read Zambia, 2008).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The Reading Room Literacy Program set off with goals and objectives to be attained. Nevertheless, from the inception of the Chongwe Reading Rooms, there is no known record of a study to find out how they are promoting literacy. We do not know the impact the Reading Rooms have had on literacy levels of basic school pupils in Chongwe. This study

attempted to investigate the effect of the Reading Rooms on literacy development of pupils in Chongwe District.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of the Reading Rooms on literacy levels of basic school pupils in Chongwe District.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. to find out the role of the library resources in promoting literacy skills among the pupils;
2. to investigate the effect of the Reading Room activities/literacy events on pupils reading culture.
3. to assess the performance of pupils on the Reading Room Literacy Program ; and
4. to identify the challenges faced by pupils on the Reading Room Literacy Program.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. what is the role of the library resources in promoting literacy skills among the pupils?
2. what are the effects of the Reading Room activities/literacy events on pupils' reading culture?
3. what is the performance of the pupils on the Reading Room Literacy Program?
4. what are the challenges faced by pupils on the Reading Room Literacy Program.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

For the program implementers, findings of this study may possibly enable them assess the merits of the program as they endeavour to foster development and improvement of literacy in rural basic schools. It is also hoped that this study may serve as an appropriate signal and information sent to stakeholders acknowledging that literacy is at the fulcrum of human life.

The findings of this study may be useful to teachers, inspectors of schools, researchers, planners and policy makers in the Ministry of Education. It is hoped that the findings of this study may help teachers to realise that the school library can serve as an essential resource for their literacy programs, initiatives and lesson preparation.

For inspectors of schools, this study may serve as a model in monitoring school libraries. For the researchers, the study may provide them with information gaps that may serve as a basis for future research undertakings.

Planners in the Ministry of Education may also use the findings of this study to prioritise funding of school Reading Rooms. Furthermore, the study may provide information to policy makers and curriculum developers on the impact of school Reading Rooms on literacy development.

For school librarians, the research findings might help them to cater better for the pupils needs. Besides, the research could further provide relevant literature on the subject and add to the already existing body of knowledge.

### **1.7 Delimitation of the Study**

Delimitations are used to address how the study is narrowed in scope (Cresswell, 1994). This study was restricted to selected basic schools in Chongwe District in Zambia.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

Limitations of the study are those conditions which are beyond the control of the researcher and may also place restrictions on the conclusions of the study (Best and Khan, 2009). This research was peculiar to Chongwe District hence findings may not be generalized to basic schools in other Districts.

### **1.9 Conceptual Framework**

There is well-established literature that identifies the major factors in promoting reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. While this literature tends to focus on individuals rather

than communities, much can be scaled up from these principles. Sanders-ten Holte (1998) and Cruz (2003) suggest that to create a culture of reading within a given society, it is necessary to improve the reading environment in the home, the school and the community at the same time, while improving the image of reading so it is more than simply school-focused. Building access to good quality, local literature is also seen as a basic principle in establishing and nurturing reading interests and habits (UN Resolution 54/122, 2002, p.6). This includes books in local languages, award winning books by regional authors/illustrators and access to authentic texts that reflect local interests and needs. Coupled with this are expectations that readers need to feel they have choice in their reading; when readers feel they have that choice and are not made to feel they must read prescribed school-based texts only, then they are more likely to be motivated to continue reading (Baker, Dreher, and Gutrie, 2000; Worthy, 1996). This gives parents, educators and librarians a major responsibility to balance reading choices that match reader interests and their reading levels (Kanade and Chudamani, 2006).

While important in our understanding of how literacy develops, sociocultural perspectives of learning and literacy are not typically part of the reading promotion literature. However, this perspective provides a powerful lens for extending knowledge of reading promotion at the individual level to include the broader community level. A sociocultural perspective posits that all learning and literacy development occurs within social and cultural contexts (Bakhtin, 1986; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1998). Within this larger frame, individuals engage in social interaction, and in that process, appropriate the values, beliefs, patterns of behavior, and abilities practised by the members of their cultural group. Thus, children, and indeed all community members to various degrees, actively strive to become insiders with whom they live and interact with. Consequently, it is not surprising that in Uganda, as everywhere in the world, children from homes where parents were literate were more likely

to enjoy reading and to be encouraged to read than in homes where parents were illiterate (Obua-otua, 1997). The community, on the other hand, supports or scaffolds apprentices into shared practices, values, and attitudes about literacy (Heath, 1983). In this way, the library, as a cultural institution, has a critical role to play in shaping attitudes towards and practices of reading. For example, providing access to and choice of reading materials is not just about serving individuals but about influencing community expectations and standards for membership in a reading culture.

There are several evaluation models. This study employed the Daniel Stufflebeams context, input, process and product evaluation (CIPP) model. These types are typically viewed as separate forms of evaluation. This model is a simple systems model applied to program evaluation. Preference is for this model because it has been very popular in education. For the purpose of this study, we made use of the process and product evaluation models.

The process evaluation model includes examining how the program is being implemented, monitoring how it is performing to see whether the aims and objectives are being met or not. The goal of process evaluation is to decide how well the program is achieving its goals.

Product evaluation on the other hand includes determining and examining the general and specific outcomes of the program (i.e., which requires using impact or outcome assessment techniques), measuring anticipated outcomes, attempting to identify unanticipated outcomes, assessing the merit of the program, conducting a retrospective benefit/cost assessment (to establish the actual worth or value of the program), and/or conducting a cost effectiveness assessment (to determine if the program is cost effective compared to other similar programs). Product evaluation is very helpful in making summative evaluation decisions (e.g., what is the merit and worth of the Reading Room Literacy program? Should the program be continued?).

### 1.10 Operational definitions

The following terms are used in the study:

**Literacy** – The ability to read, write, listen and speak.

**Literacy events** –these are activities that take place in the School Reading Rooms such as debate, drama, arts, read aloud, storytelling, book title competitions, various games (jigsaw puzzles scrabble).Literacy events expose pupils to a wide range of topics.

**Librarian** – resource person trained to provide services, materials, and opportunities for pupils who need to develop literacy skills as well as parents and teachers.

**Library Resources** – these include books, magazines, newspapers, newsletters, maps, word puzzles, games, and charts found in the school Reading Rooms.

**Reading** – is getting the meaning out of printed material. It is not merely calling out or reciting words’ but looking at the written words with understanding.

**Reading Rooms** – This term is used interchangeably with school library to mean child friendly learning environment stocked with local language children’s books and English language books, games and furniture used as a study room for the pupils.

**Reading Culture** – is the habit of reading for pleasure as well as understanding concepts. It’s a learned practice of seeking knowledge information or entertainment through the written word.

**Writing** – The act of forming graphic symbols, which relate to the sounds made by an individual when he or she speaks.

### 1.11 Organisation of the Study

Chapter One presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, hypotheses of the study, significance of the

study, delimitation of the study, limitations of the study, conceptual framework and operational definition of terms used in the dissertation.

Chapter Two focuses on review of literature. This chapter provides a review of relevant literature to the problem under study that is the impact of Reading Rooms on literacy development.

Chapter Three provides an in-depth look into the research methodology employed in the collection and analysis of data. The subtitles in the chapter are: research design; study population; sample size; sampling techniques; data collection procedure; data preparation and formatting; data analysis.

Chapter Four presents the research findings. All the research questions have been addressed in this chapter. Chapter Five is a discussion of the findings of the study. In this chapter, the findings are discussed under the headings drawn from the objectives of the research. In some cases, the actual words respondents used were included in the discussion.

Chapter Six provides the concluding remarks of the study and also makes recommendations based on major findings of the study.

### **1.12 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter presented an introduction to the study by outlining the major features. These are the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and hypotheses of the study, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study, conceptual framework and the definition of terms.

The chapter that follows provides a review of relevant literature to the problem under discussi

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Overview**

This literature review allowed the researcher to understand the study better. Additionally, the researcher used the literature review as a tool in unveiling the gaps in studies that have been carried out by various authors. These include limitations in terms of the research designs employed. The literature review also served as a dialogue between the studies conducted and the researcher. More importantly, the literature attempted to bring out issues that addressed the research questions in the current study. Furthermore, references and bibliographies found in some articles led to the discovery of materials to read.

This chapter begins with an understanding of what literacy is and the importance of conducting an impact study of a literacy program. The literature reviews the role of library resources in promoting literacy skills among pupils, activities/literacy events of the Reading Rooms meant to improve the pupils' reading culture. Various studies on the link between school libraries and literacy development are also highlighted. This section also provides a critique of the content of the reviewed material.

#### **2.1 The Meaning of Literacy**

Literacy is a human right, a tool of personal empowerment and a means for social and human development. Educational opportunities depend on literacy. UNESCO (2003) defines a literate person as one who has the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts.

In spite of the many definitions of literacy, this dissertation is rested on the following definition: "Literacy is more than to psychologically and mechanically dominate reading and

writing techniques. It is to dominate those techniques in terms of consciousness; to understand what one reads and to write what one understands: it is to *communicate* graphically. Acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words or syllables--lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe--but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context (Freire, 1974)".

## **2.2 Need for studies of the impact of literacy programs**

Duffy (2009) states that learning from existing impact studies is key to the development of a new framework. Programmes which are being managed without proper impact studies for a long period of time are likely to be moribund (Nadler, 1979). This implies that there is need to conduct an impact study for any literacy programme after a period of time.

Johnson (1987) points out the critical area of a need for impact studies of literacy programs--what are the effects of these programs? This highlights the need for well- specified objectives for literacy programs so that the effects can be investigated adequately including all aspects rather than limiting them to only the learner's progress, such as collection development, support services, and adequacy of funding and resources.

Torres (2002) notes that every community has learning resources, agents, institutions and networks that need to be identified, valued, developed and articulated to ensure that the learning needs of all in the community are met. While it is true that the provision of literacy programs is helpful in reducing illiteracy levels in different countries, it is vital to provide checks and balances through impact studies. Literacy program impact studies serve as an appropriate signal and information sent to stakeholders acknowledging that literacy is at the fulcrum of human life.

Lind (1988) contends that literacy is at the centre of human life. It is therefore important that it be considered as a fundamental human right. Literacy remains among the most neglected of

all education goals, with about 759 million adults lacking literacy skills today. Over the past decade, UNESCO's Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals have attempted to improve education and literacy by getting more children in school. According to Davidson (1988) the most recent UNESCO global statistics, illiteracy rates have increased by 5% for males and 10% for females in the least developed countries since 1990. UNESCO identified having access to a "literate environment" as one of the critical factors in supporting literacy development. If children do not have regular access to engaging books and other reading materials to practice their literacy skills, they are less likely to become lifelong readers and learners.

### **2.3 The Goal of School libraries: Promoting Literacy**

According to Lyman (1977), librarians have always seen literacy for all people as a major objective. Libraries throughout Pennsylvania, for example, have worked over the decades to "direct educational resources, human and material, in the libraries of the country towards helping every child, young person, and adult to learn to speak, read, write and compute – in brief, to learn how to learn to develop a community wide system". To achieve this legacy of literacy training, librarians have had various roles that include;

- a) provision of services, materials, and opportunities for those who need to develop literacy skills; becoming part of the educational system;
- b) extending traditional libraries, functions (support and resources) to patrons with developing literacy skills;
- c) trying nontraditional ways of serving newly literate populations; interpreting resources; and
- d) being proactive in education dissemination of information, and promotion of resource use; and collaborating with other agencies in literacy programming.

Wiebel (1992) looked at the role of the library in promoting literacy. Libraries provide information about culture, society, economy and history. The librarian serves as a “reader advisor” by suggesting and interpreting resources in the library. In addition, the library offers learning facilities and materials and promotes public discussions through the resources in their collections.

A study conducted by Lora (1990), on the role of the librarians in developing literacy reviewed that school librarians have the potential to play an active and central role in promoting reading and combating illiteracy amongst students. Libraries also support the curriculum and have an impact on student learning. The study further reviewed that library provision can contribute to academic achievement particularly in reading literacy in primary level students. The contribution of learning is dependent upon quantity and quality of collections and access to further resources and support from outside the school environment. It was also deduced that library provision is dependent upon clear guidelines and standards, staff development training and support from authorities.

Tucker (1994) argues that although the schools have made instruction a central feature of their mission in ways seldom realized at the academic level, they owe innovations in most phases of library instruction including those of conceptualization, design, experimentation, implementation and evaluation to the efforts of visionaries in academic and public institutions. Especially significant are the characterizations of school libraries as intellectual centres, learning laboratories and information bureaus. Recommendations that students rely on primary and secondary sources rather than textbooks; advocacy for increasing the accessibility of library resources; models for individualized guidance, and roles for library users as independent searchers and lifelong learners ought to be taken seriously.

Cochran-Smith (1994) observes that the mission of the school library program is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. The school librarian

empowers students to be critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skilful researchers, and ethical users of information. New conceptions of literacy acknowledge that children develop understanding about the functions and forms of reading and writing through their involvement in everyday school library activities in which print plays a primary role.

Feitelson and Goldstein (1986) note that the library is particularly important for children from extremely poor families, because they have very little access to books at home at school and their communities. The library is often their only source of books. Unfortunately, children in rural areas are the least likely to have access to quality libraries.

#### **2.4 Studies conducted on the impact of libraries on reading skills in and outside Africa**

Elley (1992) says that libraries have been shown to have a positive impact on reading skills in developing countries. School libraries enrich school curricula with plenty of supporting material and information. They can also be used as information centres for work assigned to pupils. When pupils work in a school library they learn how to co-operate as teams thereby acquiring other skills and abilities, such as linguistic skills. They also enrich their vocabularies, improve written and oral speech. School libraries also serve a compensatory role of making up for the lack of books at home. Access to school libraries serves as a motivation and stimulation for children to read. Reading Rooms motivate and stimulate children to love reading, thereby enhancing the process of inculcation of a reading culture in pupils at basic school level.

Montagnes (2001) holds that the impact of books and access to secondary reading materials on reading achievement, creativity, developing language skills and sustaining literacy has been widely acknowledged. However, positive examples of successful reading programmes or library provisions have to be mirrored by control students or communities that do not have access to the same reading programs or library services hence the need for this impact study.

One impact study comes from the READ Educational Trust in South Africa, where children in classes with classroom libraries outperformed control counterparts by as much as 189 per cent, and were ahead by 18 months in reading scores and two years in writing scores. In Zambia, such a study has not been conducted and very little is known on the role that school Reading Rooms play in development of literacy among basic school children.

Krashen et al (2008) maintain that studies consistently show that better school libraries are related to higher reading scores. The amount children read is the biggest factor in improving reading. Children need access to books in order to read a lot and the only place many of them can find a book is the library. She further concludes from a variety of studies that students obtain a large percentage of reading material from the school library. Greater access to books and libraries with professional librarians correlates with higher reading achievement. Two studies (Krashen, 1995; McQuillan, 1998) that examined the relationship between school libraries and student scores found that the number of books per student in the school library was a strong predictor of student test scores. These studies confirm the importance of access to books and demonstrate that classroom libraries, while important are not enough.

Pressley's (2006) study on effective classrooms, effective schools and entire literacy programmes in a large school with high test scores in effective reading, showed that at the centre of the curriculum is a lot of reading, with students experiencing many, books – that are read aloud to them in the classroom and library. The learners either as individuals or as a class elect to read.

The school librarian should thus, be actively involved in reading promotion by making reading materials available, together with staff to make them accessible through advice and assistance in choosing and using them, the school librarian can make a unique contribution to the encouragement and development of voluntary reading.

Spink (1989) notes that school children can use the library as preparation for reading in school. School libraries provide access to a variety of reading materials and other activities that correlate to books such as arts and crafts, songs, drama, storytelling, and puppet shows. School library activities expose children to a wide range of topics and provide opportunities for children to choose their own books and reading materials. The focus of this study is to investigate whether Room to Read libraries in Chongwe serve the same purpose.

Makotsi (2004) contends that the provision of basic collections of attractive reading materials and silent reading periods at the beginning of the school day doubles reading scores in a few months. Further, he argues that if there is a significant general improvement in reading, comprehension and writing skills, it is bound to have an impact on learning and performance in all curriculum subjects.

Emerole et al (2007) posits that the school library development is a mirror of literacy level and quality of education in its host community. The amount children read is the biggest factor in improving reading, but children need access to books in order to read a lot. The only place many children can find books is the school library. As highlighted above, studies show that better school libraries are related to higher reading scores.

Krashen (2004) contends that recreational reading is a powerful tool available for language and literacy development. The amount of pleasure reading is a strong predictor of performance on tests of writing, reading, grammar and vocabulary. This requires however, that interesting comprehensible books and other materials be easily available. Further, Krashen suggests that an often overlooked method to improving reading is providing readers with a supply of interesting and accessible books. Research suggests that self-selected voluntary reading leads to the greatest gains in reading achievement and other aspects of literacy. Krashen also suggests that school libraries can alleviate some of the literacy problems created by impoverished family conditions.

## **2.5 Activities/literacy events of the Reading Rooms meant to improve the pupils' reading culture.**

Kupetz (1993) states that literacy is a continuous process that begins in infancy. Throughout the infant and toddler years, children greatly benefit from pre-reading experiences such as those provided by school libraries. The benefits including helping children's eyes to focus, helping them recognize objects and develop sensory awareness, reinforcing basic concepts, and providing the opportunity for physical closeness so critical to young children's emotional and intellectual development. He also points out that librarians in school can serve as essential resources for parents and teachers. First, they can assemble collections of materials appropriate for very young readers such as books of rhymes, "point and say" books, "touch and smell" books, and board books. Second, they can guide parents and child-care professionals in selecting books for very young children. Finally, librarians can help parents who feel uncomfortable reading to their children by modelling read-aloud techniques, helping parents develop their own literacy, and encouraging them to enjoy their own reading.

Goodin (1991) posits that providing access to books is necessary but not sufficient. The presence of school librarians contributes to developing literacy skills independent of other measures of library quality. We do not know whether the Room to Read school libraries have similar impacts; hence this study.

Montagnes (2001) stresses that in line with the UNESCO/ADEA survey for 2000 Education for All assessment which revealed that as the decade came to a close, school libraries were said to have the lowest priorities in educational spending. Where some semblance of a school library did exist, it was often no more than a few shelves of out-dated and worn-out material, inadequately staffed. School libraries provide access to supplementary materials that complement and enhance the learning provided by prescribed textbooks. As education involves not merely memorizing information but the ability to learn independently throughout life, students need to learn how to do research on their own and explore a subject

beyond the information given in class. Teachers can encourage these critical literacy skills by introducing students to the library and by teaching them information retrieval skills.

## **2.6 Studies on the link between libraries, literacy development and academic performance.**

According to Lora (1990), libraries have been particularly involved in promoting literacy as research has highlighted the growing problem of illiteracy in America. It is therefore imperative that literacy be nurtured.

Cunningham and Stanovich (1991) assessed the construct validity of a new measure of exposure to print by using a book Title Recognition Test (TRT) with middle school students. The TRT correlated significantly with spelling, vocabulary, verbal fluency, word knowledge, and general information. Further, the TRT accounted for variance in the criterion variables when differences in both general ability and phonological decoding ability were controlled. Although correlation, the data suggest that print exposure is an independent contributor to the development of verbal abilities. Based on cumulative data from several studies, they conclude that print exposure is a significant, unique predictor of spelling, vocabulary knowledge, and general world knowledge.

Haycock (1995a, 1995b) presents a useful overview of the evidence that links school libraries and student achievement. Although the focus of the current review is on research completed since 1990, it is useful to note the key research findings in a range of pre-1990 studies which show that in schools with good libraries and the services of a school librarian students perform significantly better on tests for basic research skills and perform significantly better in reading comprehension and in their ability to express effectively ideas in relation to their reading. He also reviewed that more reading occurs when there is a school library.

The guidance of a librarian appears to exert significant influence on student achievement in information-gathering. It was also found out that in schools with good libraries and full-time

librarians, students perform better at higher levels in reading comprehension, and in knowledge and use of reference materials than students in schools with minimal or no library service; student achievement in reading, study skills and use of newspapers was significantly greater at seventh grade level in schools with professional librarians than in schools without them. This study attempts to bridge this gap and reveal the participants feelings regarding the impact that Reading Rooms have on literacy.

A critical analysis of the methodology used in these studies indicates that they were mainly quantitative. The questionnaires administered were structured. Hence the findings do not unveil the participants' opinions, feelings and emotions regarding the case under study.

Besides, the Haycock studies as highlighted above were conducted in the pre- 90's and the settings were urban and not rural. Their findings therefore may not tally with this study. Furthermore, these studies were conducted in developed countries where a number of factors such as good infrastructure, trained librarians, availability of adequate reading materials, adequate funding, as well as advanced technology may have influenced the findings. This particular research however, looks at what is pertaining in a developing country with a focus on the current situation as it unfolds on the ground. Reading skills are but just one of the many literacy skills that include speaking, listening and writing. This study is an attempt to lay bare the impact of school Reading Rooms on literacy development.

Neuman (1996) asserts that children who start out slowly in tests of literacy skills often fail to catch up, thus, falling further behind in school achievement. Exposing children to language and early literacy learning is critical to change the path of academic failure that begins in early childhood and continues to spiral downward throughout later childhood and adulthood.

Libraries are well positioned to expose children to great quantities of print and meaningful language opportunities during the crucial primary and basic school years. Research (see Krashen, 2004; Haycock, 1995; and McQuillan, 1998) has shown that the most successful

way to improve the reading achievement of children is to increase their access to reading resources (Newman et al. 2000). The best way to do this is to make the library available to them as much as possible.

Krashen (1993) says that we learn to read by reading, not through drill and practice, but by free volition, and in this way learners become readers. Incorporating information literacy has been found to improve academic achievement and to improve reading (Goodin, 1991; Harada & Yoshina, 1994; Lance 2002). Providing access to books is necessary but is not sufficient. In most cases, not all children who have access to school libraries take full advantage of them.

The presence of librarians contributes to developing literacy skills independent of other measures of library quality. School librarians assist children select appropriate reading materials and take a pivotal role in the selection of age and grade appropriate literature for the school library. They also ensure that the children find the library comfortable and quiet. Besides, the librarians work hand in hand with the teachers even as they plan for library sessions on class timetables.

According to Lance et al (1993), the first Colorado study on school libraries and student achievement found that students who score higher on norm-referenced tests tend to come from schools with more library staff, more books, more periodicals and more videos. Research shows that children need exposure to a wide variety of high-quality books of various topics, genres, and perspectives in order to acquire literacy skills. They also need books that reflect the diverse and multicultural nature of our society- books in which they can see themselves and others like them.

Lance, Wellborn and Hamilton-Pennell (1993) found a positive correlation among school library expenditures, the role of the librarian, and student achievement. Furthermore, Sinclair-Tarr and Tarr (2007) examined data from 4,022 California standard tests at the elementary,

middle and high school levels. They found statistically significant relationships between the presence of a school library and student achievement on English language, Arts and Mathematics. At the elementary level, particular library features including collection size, hours of operation, video collection, and library skills programs were correlated with student achievement.

In the study above, there was no correlation on the availability of school libraries and literacy development among the students. The focus was mainly the relationship between the presence of school library and academic performance. No correlation analysis of the pupil book ratio was done to show the link between availability of reading resources and literacy development. Moreover, these findings were based on already existing data (desk research). In addition, the studies used quantitative methods that do not take on board the feelings or opinions of the respondents. On the contrary, in a qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument who gets views of the subjects' feelings and emotions in a natural setting. Qualitative study involves having close personal contact with respondents. The current study is a product of a mixed design. This combination of the qualitative and quantitative approaches in a study results in an overall strength of findings that are comprehensive and to the point.

Furthermore, this study applied both the qualitative and quantitative research methods so as to provide an in-depth insight into the impact of libraries on literacy development.

Lance (2000) posits that a series of library variables was used to predict student performance on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) reading test. The study found that CSAP reading scores increase with increases in school library program development (such as library staff hours per student, print volumes per student, library expenditures per student); information technology (where networked computers link with other instructional sites); collaboration between teachers and library specialists (including the amount of professional

development time school librarians spend with teachers); and individual visits to the school library (particularly where flexible scheduling allows students to visit the school library as an individual rather than as part of a group). The indirect predictor of student achievement was the leadership involvement of the library staff; that is, the more involved the library specialist, the higher the level of collaboration, which in turn has an impact on test scores.

Lance (2000) identified some limitations of the original studies which he sought to address in subsequent studies. The greatest limitation Lance identified was the use of norm-referenced test scores to 'operationalize academic achievement'. At the time of the first Colorado study authentic assessment techniques had only begun to replace norm-referenced tests. Other limitations were the lack of available data for many potential library, school and community predictors, such as data related to alternative teaching styles, prevalence of disciplinary problems, and student turnover rate, the way in which information skills are taught, how teachers and library specialists plan co-operatively, and the role of technology in the school libraries. Most of the data were also collected before the release of Information Power, the national guidelines for school library media programs, whereas more recent studies undertaken by Lance and colleagues have been able to use the guidelines as a framework for examining the multiple roles of the school librarian.

Lance (1994) suggests that the findings of the Colorado study in relation to the upper grade levels could also have been strengthened as the number of schools involved in the analysis at these upper grade levels was sometimes too small. Another limitation that Lance was keen to address was that although the first Colorado study acknowledged the importance of the instructional role of the librarian, it did not define what this meant or address issues related to the value of having principle and teacher support. Nor did it demonstrate the relationship of information technology to student achievement (Lance, 2001).

Taking the Colorado studies as a point of departure, Todd and Kuhlthau (2001) chartered a new school library impact study- a qualitative one (Ohio studies). They sought to learn how students benefit from effective school library programs with trained librarians. Findings revealed that overall, students and teachers confirmed that the school libraries under study helped students by making them more information-and computer literate generally, but especially in their school work, and by encouraging them to read for pleasure and information- and in the latter case, to read critically- beyond what they are required to do for school.

The study above used a large scale model. Although this kind of model yielded important findings in the United States, it is not clear how much additional insightful information could be obtained from a similar small-scale research undertaking in the Zambian context, hence this study.

Todd (2002) asserts that micro-research studies tend to be small scale, local and employ a range of methodologies such as case studies, questionnaires, interviews, data analysis, document analysis, and group comparisons. For this particular study therefore, a focused small-scale mixed study was a more useful option.

According to Patton (2002), qualitative methodology provides information rich in-depth insight about issues of central importance to the purpose of the study. It involves having close personal contact with the participants of the study and the situation. However, findings of a qualitative research cannot be generalized because there is no hypothesis to be proved. A mixed design has more advantages hence its application in this particular study.

Oberg's (1999) case study of the Library Power initiative at Lakeside Elementary School in Tennessee was conducted in 1996-97, and used data gathered from observations, interviews and school documents, as well as scores on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) tests. The Library Power initiative at Lakeside Elementary began in 1994-

95 with the aim of improving student learning by improving school library programs. Although the subsequent 'dramatic improvement in student performance' cannot be attributed solely to the implementation of the Library Power initiative, there is enough evidence to suggest it has made a significant contribution to the positive trend in student achievement that has taken place. Some of the changes to occur as part of the Library Power initiative included more collaborative planning by the librarian and teachers, greater curriculum alignment, flexible scheduling, which allowed students the opportunity to demonstrate independent research skills in the library, a more student-centred approach to learning, improved library collections and facilities, and mandated professional development for teachers.

Oberg (1999) observed that some of the evidence attributable, at least in part, to the impact of the Library Power initiative at Lakeside Elementary School included greater library use by students for both free voluntary reading and curriculum-based projects, more challenging items being selected for personal reading, an improvement in the quality of children's work in the classroom (such as writing reports in their own words), and positive comments made by teachers in regard to the collaborative partnership with the library. When the librarian at Lakeside Elementary compared library use statistics for each classroom with the average TCAP scores for each classroom, 'she found that reading and reference scores began to climb as library use increased'.

Pharr (2002) similarly, reports on the impact of the Library Power initiative at the Lakeside Academy of Math, Science and Technology in Tennessee. She notes that after one year of flexible scheduling, when all library projects had been developed through teacher-librarian collaboration, there was a direct correlation between library usage and improved tests scores. Those teachers with the highest rate of library usage also had the highest test scores whereas the teacher who used the library least also had the lowest mastery scores.

Zweizig (1999) concludes that taken together, these studies offer a significant body of evidence to suggest that school libraries have a positive impact on student achievement. There is evidence to show that libraries can make a difference, particularly when a collaborative approach between teachers and school librarians is adopted, in areas of reading scores and student selection of reading material.

However, while yielding valuable insights, the above studies are limited by their reliance on statistical analysis. Most useful evidence was derived using qualitative methodology. Statistical analysis of examination achievement is insufficient.

Ojo (2003) found that the major causes of students' poor performance in English and other school subjects is their inability to read effectively, which in turn, is largely due to the attitude of learners towards reading. Oyetunde and Unoh (1986) list impediments to positive reading habits and attitude. These include lack of materials, poor preparation by teachers, lack of interest, poor libraries or none at all, home background, and lack of adult readers as models. However, it is important to note that these studies did not explicitly examine the impact that school libraries had on literacy development other than examining the link between academic performance and attitude of the students. This is the gap that this study intends to fill.

## **2.7 School libraries in Denmark**

Fragkos (1998) claims that Denmark has a tradition of providing libraries for all schools. School libraries in Denmark are managed by school Municipal Councils and Administrative Councils which include parents, teachers, students, and the school's director. These school libraries employ librarians who help teachers and students in the choice of material, teach information literacy skills, as well as being responsible for selecting material. The school library is also a library for teachers, who collaborate with librarians in lesson-planning. About 75% of all students visit the library once a week. The total circulation of materials in school

libraries every year amounts to 33,000,000, an average 66 books per year per student. It is not known whether this is the situation in the case of the Chongwe Room to Read libraries, hence the need for this study.

## **2.8 School libraries in Botswana (Africa)**

According to Rosenberg (2000), Village Reading Rooms in Botswana were established to support and extend library services to literacy graduates in rural areas. As they were mainly established in primary schools, today they are used mostly by pupils and teachers. Nevertheless, they provide a useful and cost effective means of giving access to educational materials in areas where no traditional library service operates. A library's primary goal is to support the work done at school as a place where pupils will become familiar with research and inquiry, which are instrumental to consolidating the school as a medium for active learning. In libraries, children learn how to work, explore, discover. It teaches children how to acquire knowledge by means of scientific or research work. School libraries contribute to stimulating imagination. School libraries encourage pupils' creative skills.

McQuillan (1998) is of the view that access to books via the school library, and the amount of reading students do are the best indicators of reading achievement. The amount children read is the biggest factor in improving reading, but children need access to books in order to read a lot, and the only place many of them can find books is the school Reading Room. Better Reading Rooms are related to higher reading scores.

## **2.9 Rural Reading Rooms in Zimbabwe**

Moyo (1995) presents several case studies of rural Zimbabwe. These projects are sponsored by the Rural Libraries Resources Development Program (RLRDP) in establishing 42 rural school libraries (some in storerooms or unoccupied classrooms). Their emphasis on community involvement is obvious even though several organisations within Zimbabwe

(Book Development Council, Library Association, and National Library) serve as partners as do some international organisations including CODE (Canada). Specific outcomes of these efforts included: progress in academic examination passes, income generating projects, community- based meetings. Here, as in most of the projects in developing countries, one of the greatest constraints is lack of reading materials; another is the need for more training on the part of library or literacy managers.

## **2.10 Libraries in Zambia**

The Government of the Republic of Zambia formalized a commitment to improving access to education and advancing national education standards that includes the establishment of educational goals (adopted in 1996) and strategies to implement those goals. The objectives include the elimination of school fees for grades 1- 7, ensuring that children enter school at an early age and remain for seven years; and the creation of effective partnerships between communities and Ministry of Education in order to mobilize local and donor funds to improve school infrastructure. Despite all the achievements that have been recorded to date, the Ministry of Education faces challenges that include a negative national attitude towards reading.

Overall, educational infrastructure is inadequate, but there is also a great disparity between the resources that go to urban schools and meagre supplies available to rural schools. Educational resources are lacking as well. If a school or children's library exists in a community, it typically has a few books, educational materials or even a library management system in place. The Ministry of Education is struggling to promote a culture of reading among adults and children.

### ***Ministry of Education Policy on Libraries in Education***

The Room to Read global goal and objectives for the Reading Rooms program fit in well with Ministry of Education policy on Libraries in Education. The two-fold policy is:

1. the Ministry of Education will seek to make books and other literature more easily available in order to promote open learning and literacy; and
2. the Ministry of Education will promote the concept of the library as an essential learning resource in all of its schools and colleges (Educating our Future, 1996).

Room to Read Zambia partners with communities to institute child-friendly libraries in primary and secondary schools. The program seeks to intervene early in the lives of children in the belief that education is a lifelong gift that empowers people to ultimately improve socio-economic conditions for their families, communities, countries, and future generations. Students become lifelong readers if they have access to print materials, motivated librarians and teachers, and time to read for pleasure, information and exploration. Libraries are an effective way of getting books in the hands of children. Accessing and using books is essential to educational success for children (Reading Rooms Global Resource Guide, 2011). With sufficient investment and support, Reading Rooms will have a major positive impact on the promotion of literacy and consequently the achievement of Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals. Zambia in particular will have a population that not only can read but will read, write, speak and listen intelligently. This calls for a willingness to commit scarce resources towards the support of school libraries.

### **2.11 Challenges encountered by learners**

Makotsi (2004:6) points out that in many schools that are trying to meet the government targets for Universal Primary Education, there is an acute lack of textbooks, let alone supplementary reading materials. It is common for one textbook to be shared between six or more pupils, and often there are no textbooks at all. Therefore, the challenge for many schools is to create a literate environment when funding is scarce.

Rosenberg (2000) observes that the situation of libraries differs enormously worldwide. Some countries and regions, such as the United Kingdom, have well-supported library systems, where a well-established library network extends to every community. In stark contrast are countries such as Kenya with only 36, Namibia with 48 and Zambia with 22 public libraries. These libraries were set up under unfavorable conditions, and as Rosenberg offers in a bleak description of a typical rural African library, their future is often not secured:

“Originating from the initiative of a group from the community or an aid agency, their birth is followed by a year or two of rapid growth and a good deal of local publicity and attention. This is followed by a period of slow decline, accompanied by theft, the departure of the initiators, loss of interest among staff and users- the library still exists but signs of life are barely discernible. Sometimes, this period continues indefinitely, but often a final stage is reached when all remaining books are removed, stolen, or damaged beyond repair and the premises and staff are allocated to another activity ” (Rosenberg, quoted by Mostert, 2001: 48).

Roseroka (1993) reports that school systems from which university students emerge have their own pressures. Librarians and supplementary reading materials are increasingly seen as luxury. As a result, school learning systems rely on school textbooks and teacher’s notes. There are generally no school librarians. Where there are school librarians, they are torn between teaching loads, library technical services and, the on-going struggle of promoting the library beyond the general perception of it as the study room. Other major problems and challenges in the creation, organization maintenance and use of libraries include lack of funds, lack of professional staff, irrelevant material, lack of training opportunities, inappropriate buildings, lack of needs analysis and a lack of co-operation and a national information policy.

## **2.12 Summary of the Chapter**

The foregoing literature review immensely informed and shaped the current study. The literature review has also provided a critique of the methodologies employed in similar studies. There is a consensus among authors that school libraries have an impact on literacy development. For any literacy program to succeed there's need for collaborative effort between librarians and teachers. It is also cardinal to train and re-train school librarians. Sufficient funds also need to be allocated to literacy programs.

There is very little literature on the impact of school Reading Rooms on literacy development in Zambia. It is imperative therefore; that this study examines the impact of school Reading Rooms on literacy development. The following chapter focuses on the methodology that was employed in data collection in this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Overview**

Research methodology refers to “...techniques used to structure a study, gather and analyse information in a systematic way” (Polit & Beck 2004: 731). The methods used were described comprehensively, including the context in which the data collection took place particularly the relationship between the research questions and data collection (De Vos et al, 2005). This chapter covers the following areas: research design, population of the study, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection procedures, data preparation and formatting, data analysis and ethical considerations.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

According to Bless and Achola (1983), the research design provides answers for such questions as: what kind of sampling will be used to gather data? How will time and cost constraints be dealt with? In order to provide accurate results, the researcher adopted a mixed (triangulation) approach and employed both quantitative and qualitative research designs. This was because the study used research instruments that included interview schedules (with some participants and key informants) and open ended questionnaires. The study also included tests for literacy skills administered to two groups of pupils, those with a Reading Room and those that did not have one. The concept of mixing methods (triangulation) is based on the recognition that any method used on its own has limitations and biases which could be reduced by employing triangulation. A mixed/triangulation design is useful to capture the best of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. It also reduces biasness (Cresswell, 2003).

Case study research, according to Denscombe (1998:39), is beneficial because the focus on one or a few instances allows the researcher to deal with subtleties and intricacies of complex social situations. Further, Denscombe (1998) posits that the case study research enables the researcher to deal with relationships and social processes in a way that is denied to the survey approach. The researcher selected the case study methodology so as to maximize what could be learnt in the period of time available for the study. One of the greatest advantages of a case study method is that it allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance (in this study, the case of selected basic schools in Chongwe District) or situation and to identify, or attempt to identify the various interactive processes at work (Bell, 1999). The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches in its data collection and analysis.

### **3.2 Study Population**

Kothari (1995) defines study population as a group that one wishes to generalize the research to. The population of this study included all pupils in selected basic schools in Chongwe District.

### **3.3 Sample Size**

According to Burrington (1975), a sample is a subset of a population. The sample must have properties which make it representative of the whole. This study used a sample size of 210 respondents comprising of 4 Male Officials from DEBS, 12 Head teachers (4 females and 8 males), 4 librarians (2 females and 2 males), 40 teachers (22 females and 18 males), and 150 Grade five pupils (62 females and 88 males).

Both simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used in this study. The DEBS officials, Head teachers and School librarians were selected purposively using expert/key informant sampling. Purposive sampling means the researcher is sampling with a purpose in mind. It targets sources that are rich in information that a researcher needs to gather (Brink, 1996). The researcher used purposive sampling to ensure that only individuals possessing

unique experiences and knowledge not shared by the rest were targeted (key informants). Teachers and pupils were randomly selected. Simple random sampling is the most basic process of random sampling. The researcher cut strips of paper with each paper bearing a number which represented each unit in the population. These strips of paper were mixed and randomly selected by conducting a raffle draw until required sample size was reached. In this way, equal chances were given to each unit.

**Table 1: Distribution of Sample Size by Gender**

Category of Sample size	Female	Male	Total
Ministry of Education Officials	0 (0%)	4 (1.9%)	4 (1.9%)
Head teachers	4 (1.9%)	8 (3.8 %)	12 (5.7%)
Librarians	2 (0.95%)	2 (0.95%)	4 (1.9%)
Teachers	22 (10.5%)	18 (8.6%)	40 (19%)
Pupils	62 (29.5 %)	88 (57.1%)	150 (100%)
	<b>90 (42.9%)</b>	<b>12 (57.14%)</b>	<b>210 (100%)</b>

### 3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Wall (1986) defines data as numbers or symbols assigned to characteristics of objects or events. These numbers may be descriptive or simply classificatory. Symbols serve to identify

objects or events considered equivalent for analysis. Data collection is a process of gathering information from respondents aimed at proving or refuting some facts. Data collection is important in research as it allows for dissemination of accurate information and development of meaningful programs.

The data collection exercise was undertaken over a period of six weeks. The actual procedure began by seeking authority from the District Education Board Secretary (DEBs) to conduct interviews with some officials at his office and carry out research in selected basic schools in the District.

In order to achieve the study objectives, interviews with District Education Board Officials and trained school librarians were conducted to solicit information on the Reading Rooms. During interviews, the responses to the questions were written down by the researcher as the interviewees gave their views. The researcher used interviews because of their flexibility (Patton, 2002). Besides, they allow depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand interviewee's responses.

Thereafter, data was collected from Headteachers and teachers through open ended questionnaires. Questionnaires were used to elicit their opinions, attitudes and perceptions. The researcher found the open-ended questionnaire as a suitable instrument for data collection because questionnaires can be used to gather information in the shortest possible time.

Tests (literacy skills) were administered to one set of pupils in schools with Reading Rooms and the same tests to another set of pupils in a school that was similar in all respects apart from a Reading Room; i.e. the control group. The difference in scores was taken to mean the impact of the Reading Rooms.

### **3.5 Data Preparation and Formatting**

All the data collected orally was transcribed in readiness for analysis. Data preparation and formatting was done simultaneously whilst in the field. It was prepared and arranged into categories based on themes emerging from the collected data. Quantitative data was analysed after data collection.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis and quantitative data analysis were employed. Combining the two methods is called triangulation. Jick (1983) believes that triangulation can uncover a unique variance that might not have appeared in a single method of investigation. Jick (1983) suggests that it increases confidence of results and allows for creative methods. At the same time, new ways of seeing a problem that may have been overlooked before may be balanced with the common methodologies and a new dimension of the problem may be uncovered. Data analysis entails categorizing, ordering and summarizing the data and describing them in meaningful terms.

Qualitative data are the detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions and observed behaviors; direct quotations from people about their experiences, documents, correspondence, records and case histories. Quantitative measurements use objective and standardized instruments to limit data collection to prescribe categories of response (Merriam and Simpson, 1995).

Descriptive data were analyzed through thematic approach where it was categorized, tabulated and arranged under themes and sub-themes. Quantitative data were analyzed using the Social Package for the Social Sciences Software (SPSS) and interpreted as percentages and graphs.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

In conducting the study among the participants, permission was sought from the DEBS and School heads before the instruments were administered. Assurance was given that no harm, neither emotional nor physical, would be inflicted on the respondents. Further, an assurance that the findings of the research will be used for academic purpose only and that confidentiality would be maintained and names of subjects withheld was given. All respondents were asked to read the consent form, and only signed it after agreeing to participate in the research.

### **3.8 Summary of the Chapter**

The chapter has provided an in-depth overview into the research methodology used in the study. Included under this chapter were: research design, study population, sample size, data collection procedure, data preparation and formatting, data analysis and ethical considerations. The next Chapter provides the research findings. Statistical analysis where appropriate were done.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 Overview**

The previous chapter discussed the methodology which was adopted for this study. The present chapter presents the findings on the impact of Reading Rooms on literacy development. The findings are based on the research questions which were: (i) What is the role of library resources in promoting literacy skills among pupils? (ii) What are the effects of the Reading Room activities/literacy events on pupils reading culture? (iii) What is the performance of the pupils on the Reading Room literacy program? (iv) What are the challenges faced by pupils on the Reading Room literacy program? A summary of the chapter will then be given at the end.

#### **4.1 What is the role of library resources in promoting literacy skills among pupils?**

The first question sought to find out the role of the library resources in promoting literacy skills among the pupils. To answer this question, interviews were conducted with school librarians. Subsequently, questionnaires were administered to the teachers.

##### **a) Library Resources**

Respondents confirmed that library resources comprised books, newspapers, computers, teacher's guides, pupil's textbooks, charts and maps. They emphatically said that these resources exposed pupils to a wide range of topics.

Respondents were quick to say that library resources helped enhance literacy skills in pupils. They were of the view that the reading resources stimulated pupils reading habits and communication as pupils were said to participate in class discussions and read independently. Furthermore, they observed that the implementation of the Reading Rooms in their respective

schools allowed pupils the opportunity to demonstrate independent research skills and a more student-centred approach to learning.

One out of forty respondents observed that due to exposure to library resources, the pupils were keen to explore subjects beyond information given in class. Furthermore, she said the pupils read for pleasure in their free time and were able to collaborate as teams.

#### **b) Appropriateness of library resources**

Respondents noted that the books and other reading materials in the Reading Room were age and grade appropriate. They said the reading resources were suitable for all grades. Additionally, they reported that pupils that participated in Reading Room Literacy activities scored higher in reading achievement tests, improved vocabularies, enhanced written and oral speech.

One out of four respondents noted that library resources enabled pupils to go beyond information searching and retrieval to incorporate inquiry and critical thinking. He noted that the destination is no longer information, but new knowledge with a focus on productivity and personal growth. He also commented that:

‘In their free time, I find them (pupils) reading unlike 3 years ago when we did not have a school Reading Room. I have also noticed pupils love for reading as the most rewarding aspect of the Room to Read initiative in this area.

There was a general feeling that the school library resources provided opportunities for pupils to select their own books and read independently. The respondents pointed out that library resources supplemented and enhanced learning provided by prescribed textbooks. They also indicated that exposure to library resources had a positive impact on pupils’ attitude towards reading and ultimately impacted on their academic performance in other subjects.

### **c) Accessibility and comfort**

Some respondents noted that the floor mat in the library provided the pupils with a lot of comfort as compared to the classroom atmosphere. A good number of them sat on the mat as they engaged in various literacy activities.

One out of the four respondents interviewed said that the Reading Rooms were conducive and accessible for both the teachers and pupils. He maintained that the integration of library resources into school learning and teaching provided the learners with a literate environment. Use of the Reading Room has led to the increase in reading enjoyment, higher self-assessment of reading ability as well as more positive attitudes towards reading, writing, listening and speaking.

On the contrary, some respondents noted that these rooms were too small and had little furniture to accommodate the whole class at a given time.

### **d) Library Sessions**

Respondents disclosed that library sessions for all the classes in every stream were time-tabled. Each class had one library session each week. One respondent said that on daily basis, specific classes go to the Reading Room. He acknowledged that school Reading Room sessions were time-tabled.

### **e) Training in Library Management**

Respondents confirmed that they had undergone training in library management. They also said that they attended refresher courses organised by the Room to Read program implementers at the local resource centres. Respondents said the kind of training focused on how to reach out to potential users and how to be at the centre of literacy development. One of the respondents expressed delight with the fact that the training was relevant to local conditions and equipped her with creative skills.

In one school, a respondent said he attended a weeklong training program (full-day training sessions) in three phases. The first phase focused on the role of the school librarian and librarian survival skills (i.e creating a welcoming school library, rudimentary library organization, simple book repair, stocktaking techniques). He stated that phase two focused on reading promotion and interesting library activities/events and age and grade selection of print materials. The third phase focused on incorporating reading into curriculum and addressed the link between reading and academic achievement. We also learnt the importance of networking and collaborating with class teachers.

One out of four respondents said that teacher librarians that had undergone training organised local training sessions to equip other teachers in library survival skills that included book mending. She also noted that there was a committee responsible for lending books. A good number of our pupils have also been trained in library management.

#### **4.1.2 What is the role of library resources in promoting literacy skills?**

When librarians were asked to state the role of library resources in promoting literacy skills among the pupils, the following were the responses:

##### **a) Library resources**

Respondents stated that library resources supplemented their class readers and provided a rich resource for teaching and learning. Furthermore, they reported that pupils that participated in Reading Room Literacy activities scored higher in reading achievement tests, improved vocabularies, enhanced written and oral speech. Besides, our school Reading Room plays a role of making up for the lack of books at home.

Respondents were of the view that the library resources supported literacy development in the pupils. They also pointed out that there was a tremendous improvement in terms of academic performance from the inception of the Reading Rooms.

A similar picture emerged among some respondents who said that library resources were essential in the life and development of the child. In addition, they claimed that library resources were a stimulus to the intelligence and imagination of library users, an incentive to independent thinking and a source of information and enjoyment. Books and other library resources are indispensable tools in education.

One out of the four respondents stated that every fortnight, she assigned her class to borrow a book of their choice from the Reading Room, read it and make a summary. She further commented that she had observed that ultimately, the pupils' communication skills and creative imagination had improved. The school Reading Room development is a real mirror of the literacy level and quality of education in the school. Moreover, no excellent educational programme can be developed without the support of a well organized school Reading Room.

#### **b) Reading culture/ attitude**

Respondents acknowledged that there were positive attitudes towards reading among pupils from 2008 when the Reading Rooms were introduced. They went on further to say that most pupils that had challenges in reading and writing had been motivated. The pupils not only changed their attitude towards reading but had become lifelong learners and readers.

Some respondents said that the pupils were accorded the opportunity to read voluntarily. For many pupils, the supportive atmosphere of a home which values books and reading is probably not sufficient to ensure that they too will share these values. The school Reading Rooms therefore provided a supportive atmosphere for learning. Pupils were said to have been given the best opportunity to read.

One out of the four respondents stated that pupils that use the Reading Room more often tend to hold more positive attitudes towards reading than those who seldom do. Library resources

inculcate and wake the interest of reading in children. She indicated that pupils on the literacy program developed a positive attitude to learn and were motivated to read with confidence.

Respondents were of the view that the implementation of the Reading Rooms was a gate way to literacy development in the pupils. They said that pupils showed signs of becoming lifelong readers.

#### **c) Training in Library Management**

Some respondents indicated that they had undergone library management training prior to the establishment of the Reading Room.

#### **d) Literacy levels and school libraries**

Respondents also stated that the guidance of the school librarian had a lot of influence on student achievement in information-gathering and academic performance. They observed that from the time the Reading Rooms were implemented, pupils performed better in reading comprehension, and acquired good writing skills.

### **4.2 What are the effects of the Reading Room activities/literacy events on pupils**

#### **reading culture?**

The second question was designed to investigate the effects of the Reading Room activities/literacy events on pupils reading culture. To answer this question, interviews were conducted with school librarians while questionnaires were employed to elicit data from teachers.

#### **4.2.1 Findings from questionnaires administered to teachers and interviews conducted with librarians.**

When librarians and teachers were asked to state the activities and events of the Reading Rooms meant to improve pupils reading culture, the following were their responses:

Respondents were of the view that the Reading Room activities/literacy events included:

Reading competitions, school publicity materials, book fairs, flash and word cards, charts, newsletters, book review writing, short story writing competitions, songs, various games (scrabble, playing cards, jigsaw puzzles, word puzzles), Debate, story train, popular theatre, read aloud, book discussions, popular theatre, computer literacy games and programs, research work, observation of literacy and open days, reading clubs, magazines and displaying of popular book characters on soft boards around the school.

One out of forty respondents said she asked individual pupils to read quietly for fifteen minutes while providing support and monitoring the reading. Her response was: “Sometimes, I play some stories on the tape recorder (pre-recorded in my own voice). I ask pupils either individually or in groups to read along with me (teacher) as the tape plays.”

Respondents mentioned that they held a number of reading and writing competitions, where fluent readers were awarded a small token like a certificate, a book or badge. Pupils were also encouraged to write book reviews that were corrected by the class teacher. The best reviews were presented during assemblies held every fortnight (this was done briefly but enthusiastically). The best book reviews were later pinned on the library soft boards. This finding can be supported by Krashen’s (2004) views confirming that recreational reading is the most powerful tool available for language and literacy development. The amount of pleasure reading is a strong predictor of performance on tests of writing, reading, grammar and vocabulary.

Respondents said Reading Room magazines and newsletters whose articles came from the pupils helped the learners develop writing skills. Furthermore, the respondents observed that display of books and posters reflecting current events and fellow pupil’s creative works (such as story trees/trains) created literacy awareness and a curiosity in the pupils.

One out of four respondents pointed out that a library quiz was held once a term where classes competed and small tokens that included age and grade appropriate books are given to

winners. She also said that her school Reading Room organized reading competitions twice a term where parents were invited.

Respondents also said that the school time-table was tailored in such a manner that pupils were encouraged to participate in many Reading Room activities to promote reading, writing, speaking and listening skills- reading aloud, reading initiatives and book discussions.

One out of four respondents stated that they had a communication strategy in place that included use of popular theatre, meetings, leaflets and fliers and other media that aimed at creating awareness on the importance of school Reading Rooms and reading. This strategy was said to elicit pupil's involvement in the school Reading Room activities thereby promoting literacy development.

#### **4.3 What is the performance of pupils on the Reading Room Literacy Program?**

The third question sought to assess the performance of pupils on the Reading Room literacy program. In order to answer this question, literacy skills tests were administered to both pupils in schools with Reading Rooms and in another school similar in all respects apart from possessing a Reading Room (i.e control group).

##### **a) A comparison of literacy test score statistics for schools A and C.**

<b>Basic School A</b>	<b>Basic School C (control)</b>
Mean = 45.12	Mean= 15.8
Coefficient of Variation = 28.7	Coefficient of Variation = 88.4

The statistical results in the table above show that Basic School A has a higher mean compared to Basic School C (i.e. control). The Coefficient of Variation for Basic School A

(28.7) is lower than that of Basic School C (88.4). This means that the dispersion (variability) in the results of Basic School A is lower than that of Basic School C (i.e. control).

**b) A comparison of literacy test score statistics for schools B and C.**

<b>Basic School B</b>	<b>Basic School C (control)</b>
Mean = 52.28	Mean= 15.8
Coefficient Variation = 26.8	Coefficient Variation = 88.4

The statistical results in the table above show Basic School B has a higher mean compared to Basic School C (i.e control). The Coefficient of Variation for Basic School B (26.8) is lower than that of Basic School C (88.4). This means that the dispersion (variability) in the results of Basic School B is lower than that of Basic School C.

#### 4.3.1 Diagrammatic representation of findings from research question linking academic performance to Reading Rooms.

**Figure 1: Mean score test results for Basic Schools A, B and C (control).**

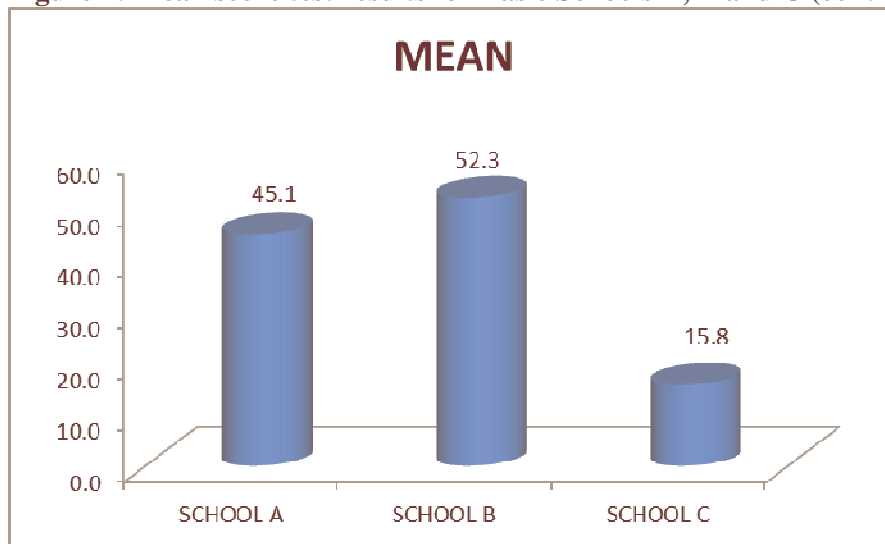
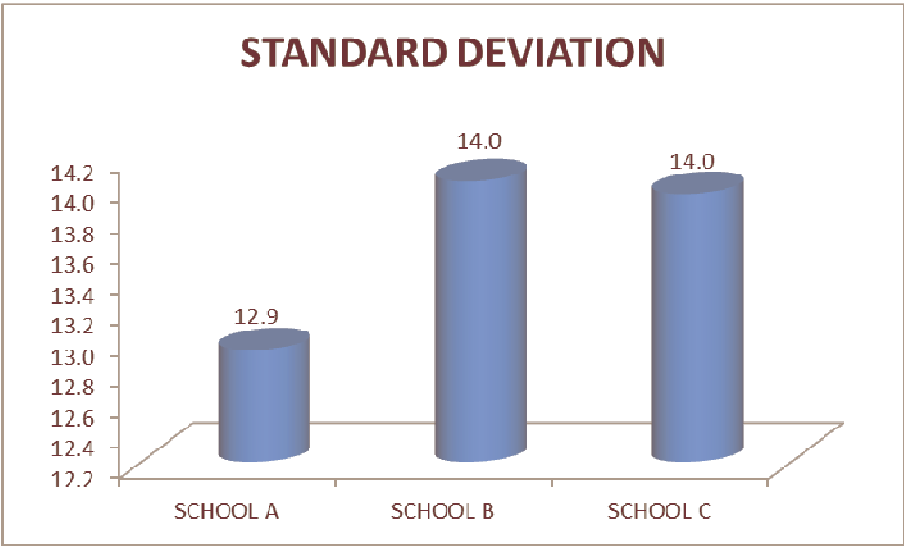


Figure 1 shows that the results in the mean score of pupils in basic schools with Reading Rooms (Schools A and B) were higher than those of the basic school that did not have one (i.e control group). The mean for School A was 45.1 and School B was 52.3 whilst that of School C was lower at 15.8. The difference in the mean scores was taken to be the impact of the Reading Rooms on pupil's literacy levels.

**Figure 2: Standard Deviation for Basic Schools A, B and C Test scores.**



The figure above indicates how dispersed the scores were from the mean. Standard deviation for School A was 12.9, School B was 14.0 and School C (control group) was 14.0.

**Figure 3 : Mean, Standard Deviation and Coefficient Variance for Basic Schools A B and C Test results.**

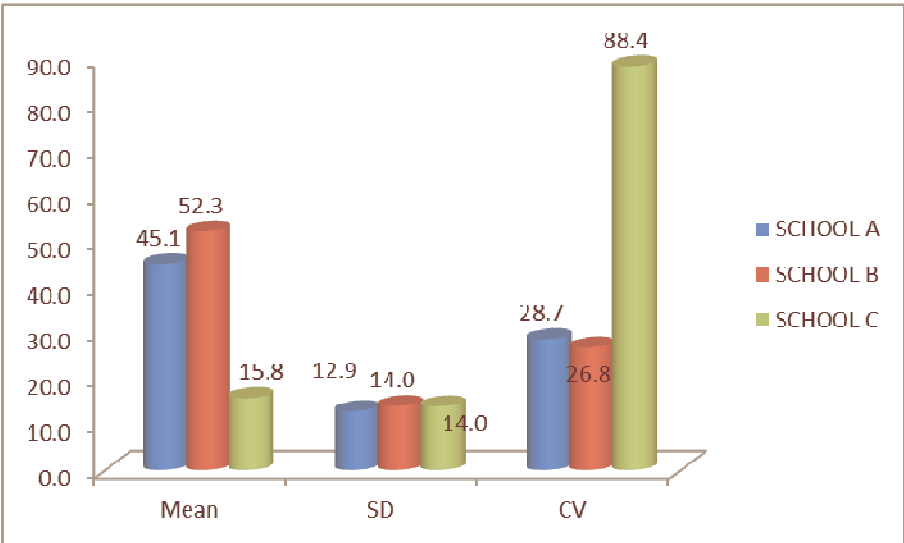


Figure 3 above shows that the performance of pupils in basic schools with Reading Rooms was better than that of pupils in basic schools that did not have one (i.e control group). This is

evidenced by the Coefficient of Variation which is lower in both schools compared to that of the control group. The Coefficient of Variation in Schools A and B was 28.7 and 26.8 respectively whilst in the School C, it was 88.4. This implies that the dispersion (variability) in the results of the two schools compared to the control group (C) is lower.

### **ANOVA REGRESSION RESULTS (Control of extraneous variables)**

#### **A) Teacher Training in Library Management.**

Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	81.620	3.408		23.948	.000
Teachers received- Training_by_prgm_Implementer	-32.920	2.410	-.747	-13.660	.000

#### **Model Summary**

Model	R	R.Square	Adjusted R Square	Std.Error of the Estimate
1	.747 <sup>a</sup>	.558	.555	13.914

a. Predictors: (Constant), Teachers\_recieved –training-by prgam-implementer

The ANOVA regression shows that extra training of teachers in library management contributes positively (55.8%) to pupils performance in the literacy test administered.

#### **B) Availabilty of Materials.**

Model	R	R.Square	Adjusted R Square	Std.Error of the Estimate
1	.614	.377	.373	16.510

b. Predictors: (Constant), Availability\_of\_material

The ANOVA regression results in the table above show that availability of materials has little bearing on pupil performance compared to training of teachers in library management. Time on task and school culture were constant variables.

#### **4.4 What are the Challenges encountered by pupils on the Reading Room Literacy Program?**

The fourth question sought to establish challenges encountered by the pupils on the Reading Room literacy program. To answer this question, interviews were conducted with school librarians. Sequentially, questionnaires were used to obtain data from teachers.

##### **4.4.1 Findings from school librarians and teachers**

Respondents observed that in most cases, the librarian's negative attitude was an impediment to pupil's use of the Reading Rooms. Further, they explained that most of the time, the librarian was busy with other school responsibilities, thereby making the Reading Room inaccessible to the pupils. The respondents were of the view that schools should engage full-time librarians.

Some respondents said that Reading Rooms were too small to accommodate a large class at once. This made it very difficult for pupils to access library resources and use the library during their preparation session.

Lack of collaboration by the teachers was also sighted as a challenge by some respondents. They said that in some cases, subject teachers did not cooperate with the school librarian.

One of the respondents said that school librarians overwhelming load was a deterrent factor for the pupil's full use and benefit of the Reading Room. Most of the time, the school librarian was busy running to and fro coordinating other activities, hence denying children the help they urgently require. The respondent further said he had observed that their school

Reading Room was closed most of the time. He said that this discouraged pupils from going there to study when free.

Another respondent observed that part time librarians often had to juggle multiple roles, including a heavy teaching load or alternative duties such as resource person, senior teacher and class teacher. This situation creates an impediment to the cultivation of reading habits in the learners even when there are good collections and the school librarian's spirit is willing.

Respondents reported that insufficient funding for library resources made it impossible to conduct interesting library activities that promote literacy development such as book fairs and other competitions. Additionally, the respondents said that there was very little time allocated to library activities for classes on the timetable.

Respondents also claimed that donated books that were mostly British depicted British culture and made it difficult for pupils to understand. They stated that these books contained irrelevant materials which were boring and strange.

Respondents stressed that Reading Rooms were too small to accommodate a large number of pupils at a time. One of the respondents pointed out that each time the pupils were supposed to use the Reading Room for studies, the class had to be split into two. This meant that one group would not have access to the library resources at that particular time.

#### **4.5 Summary of the Chapter**

The chapter presented the findings of the study regarding the impact of Reading Rooms on literacy development among basic school pupils in Chongwe District, Zambia. Quantitative data were presented in the form of tables while qualitative data were coded and themes were generated.

The statistical findings showed that pupils with Reading Rooms outperformed their counterparts without one (i.e control group) in the literacy skills tests administered. It was

also observed that exposure to a rich print environment enhanced pupils reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

In an attempt to control for some extraneous variables, an ANOVA Regression Analysis showed that teachers that received extra training had a positive bearing on the performance of pupils. The availability of reading materials was less significant. Time on task, teacher qualification and school culture remained constant ( no influence on the performance of pupils).

The study also revealed that the activities/events of the Reading Rooms motivated, stimulated and provided a literate environment for literacy development.

The next chapter discusses the findings of this study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 5.0 Overview

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of the Reading Rooms on literacy development among pupils in Chongwe District. The previous chapter presented findings of the study. The present chapter discusses the findings of the study. The discussion was guided by the research objectives which were: to find out the role of the library resources in promoting literacy skills among the pupils; to investigate the effects of the Reading Room activities on pupils reading culture; and to assess the performance of pupils on the Reading Room literacy program; to identify the challenges faced by pupils on the Reading Room literacy program.

#### 5.1 To find out the role of the library resources in promoting literacy skills among the pupils.

The study findings revealed that access to books and other interesting library resources impacted positively on pupils reading achievement, creativity and development of language skills. These findings tie in with Neuman & Celano (2001) position to the effect that school libraries are in a remarkable position to expose children to great qualities of print and meaningful language opportunities that are crucial to reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Neuman and Celano also stress that children that participate in the many library activities benefit from the much literacy related activities which aid significantly in literacy development.

From the findings above, it can be deduced that provision of interesting library resources play a cardinal role in inculcating positive reading attitudes in pupils. Furthermore, the resources

were said to be key drivers in providing rural children the opportunity to engage in independent research; subsequently becoming critical thinkers, better readers and writers. The study also pointed to the fact that reading resources consequently enhanced the learner's communication skills.

On the overall, the above findings indicated that the reading culture of the pupils was rejuvenated. Respondents said pupils visited the Reading Rooms and read for leisure in their free time. This was also evident from the library's lending records. Books and other library resources in the Reading Rooms are essential in the life and development of the child. They stimulate creativity, intelligence and imagination in a child. Put together, a clear picture of the impact of school Reading Rooms in literacy development in basic school pupils was depicted.

The foregoing finding was in line with the views of Krashen (2004) to the effect that "...given interesting and comprehensible reading materials, nearly all the children find reading pleasant and eventually read. Research and common sense conclude that the best way to ensure adequate literacy development for all children, is to make sure that they have the opportunity to do a great deal of recreational, self-selected reading. The best way to make sure this happens is to have excellent school libraries with trained librarians. It is well established that school libraries are the only source of books of rural children. In a similar view, Neuman (2000) contends that the most successful way to improve the reading achievement of children is to increase their access to reading resources.

However, in some schools visited, the teachers said they could only conduct a limited number of Reading Room activities. They said there were insufficient numbers of chairs and tables. Reading Rooms were also said to be too small to accommodate the large number of pupils. One of the teachers said the books in the Reading Room were mostly British and made it

difficult for the pupils to comprehend messages in them. He was of the idea that in future, Reading Rooms should be stocked with more local books.

It was evident from the preceding findings that provision of appropriate library resources in an accessible Reading Room with a trained librarian was linked to the development of high levels of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in the pupils. Subsequently, the pupil's academic performance was enhanced. The school Reading Rooms therefore enhanced literacy skills and ultimately improved pupil's academic performance. School Reading Rooms had a bearing on pupil's literacy skills development.

The above mentioned finding can be supported by the Haycock (1995) studies that presented useful evidence linking school libraries and student achievement. The Haycock studies also revealed that more reading occurs when there is a school library. The above sentiments justify the fact that school libraries are a potent factor in literacy development.

#### **a) Training (librarian)**

It emerged from the study that all the school librarians were trained. They revealed that they had undergone training in library management and still attended refresher courses at Chongwe and Silver Rest Resource Centres. This finding is in tandem with Traveline's (1997) perception to the extent that today's school library is like a big playground waiting to be explored and the librarian is the best playmate: one who makes the playground worthwhile. A competent, effective and trained school librarian is key to good library service. A trained and highly knowledgeable teacher librarian can coordinate activities in the school library.

The study also revealed that trained librarians were able to select and produce materials, and become acquainted with the resources of the school library to educate pupils. It was also found that school librarians were creative and innovative.

The above findings can be supported by Krashen (2004) who holds that better school libraries are related to better reading achievement. The reason for this is obvious: children become better readers by reading more. Further, she argues that the library is a major source of books for children.

#### **b) Pupil's literacy skills**

The study established that pupil achievement in reading was significantly greater in schools that had Reading Rooms with trained teacher librarians than in schools without them. The finding also revealed that in schools with Reading Rooms, pupils listening, writing, speaking and reading skills were greatly enhanced.

The above findings conform to Goodin (1991) proposition suggesting that providing access to books is necessary but not sufficient. The presence of school librarians contributes to developing literacy skills independent of other measures of library quality.

The study findings unveiled the fact that the school librarian assists in providing necessary teaching and learning resources for both teachers and pupils. Besides, it was also noted that the school librarian helped pupils develop interest in reading and independent learning. The pupils were said to have acquired lifelong reading, speaking, listening and writing skills through exposure to the Reading Rooms. This finding is supported by Emerole et al (2007) who insist that the school library development is a mirror of literacy level and quality of education in its host community.

The study findings revealed that books and other library resources in the Reading Rooms were powerful tools that contributed to literacy development. This finding is consistent with McQuillan's (1998) investigations on the effects of access to books and the amount children read on student performance in the United States of America. To this extent, McQuillan (1998) contends that access to books and the amount of reading students do are the best indicators of reading achievement.

### **c) Link between reading culture and library resources**

The study findings also revealed the fact that exposure to library resources had a positive impact on pupils' attitude towards reading and ultimately impacted on their academic performance in other subjects. These findings can be supported by Makotsi (2004) who contends that the provision of basic collections of attractive reading materials and silent reading periods at the beginning of the school day doubles reading scores in a few months. Further, he argues that if there is a significant general improvement in reading, comprehension and writing skills, it is bound to have an impact on learning and performance in all the other curriculum subjects.

Moreover, the study brought forth the fact that library resources helped to enhance literacy skills in pupils, stimulated their reading habits and communication activities. The implementation of the Reading Rooms in schools allowed pupils the opportunity to demonstrate independent research skills and a more student-centred approach to learning. Furthermore, it revealed that library resources enabled pupils to generate new information and supported the teaching process as required by the curriculum.

### **5.2 To investigate the effect of the Reading Room activities/ events on pupils reading culture.**

The study findings revealed that pupils were engaged in various Reading Room activities that included reading and writing competitions, where fluent readers were identified and awarded a small token like a certificate, a book or badge. It was established through the study findings that pupils were also encouraged to write book reviews that were corrected by the class teacher. The best reviews were presented during assembly every fortnight (this was done briefly but enthusiastically). The best book reviews were later pinned on the library soft boards. This finding ties in with Krashen's (2004) argument conforming that recreational reading is the most powerful tool available for language and literacy development. The

amount of pleasure reading is a strong predictor of performance on tests of writing, reading, grammar and vocabulary. This requires however that interesting comprehension books and other materials be easily accessible to pupils.

### **5.3 To assess the performance of pupils on the Reading Room Literacy Program.**

The statistical findings of the study showed that the performance of pupils in basic schools with Reading Rooms were better than those of basic schools that did not have one (i.e control group). This is evidenced by the Coefficient of Variation which is lower in both schools (School A and B) compared to that of the control group (School C). This implies that the dispersion (variability) in the results of the two schools compared to the control group (C) is lower.

In addition to the aforesaid, this study finding can be supported by Sinclair- Tarr and Tarr (2007) studies that found statistically significant relationships between the presence of a school library and student higher achievement in English language, Arts and Mathematics.

Moreover, the study findings are in consonance with the findings of Lora (1990) that reviewed that libraries support the curriculum and have an impact on student learning. The study further reviewed that library provision can contribute to academic achievement particularly in reading literacy in primary level students.

Furthermore, the statistical analysis results confirmed that there was a positive impact/ link between school Reading Rooms and literacy development. It was evident from the study findings that there was a positive relationship between school Reading Rooms and academic performance. Taken together, studies by Oberg (1999) collaborate with the current study findings as they offer significant evidence suggesting that school libraries have a positive impact on student achievement. These findings can also be supported by Zweizig (1999) et al who argue that school libraries have an impact not only on student achievement in standardized tests but also on learning more broadly.

#### **5.4 To identify the challenges faced by pupils on the Reading Room Literacy Program.**

The study had shown that despite the numerous benefits of having Reading Rooms in a number of schools with trained teacher librarians, pupils on the literacy program faced a number of challenges highlighted below:

##### **a) Size of Reading Room too small**

The study revealed that the size of the Reading Rooms posed a challenge on the pupils because only a few could be accommodated at once. This finding is contrary to Krashen (2004)'s view that accessibility and comfort of a school library are cardinal in the promotion of literacy among pupils.

##### **b) Insufficient funding of Reading Rooms**

The study findings showed that insufficient funding for library resources made it impossible to conduct interesting library activities that promoted literacy development such as book fairs and other competitions.

##### **c) Negative attitude by teacher librarian**

The study established that the teacher librarian's negative attitude was an impediment to pupil's possibility to develop literacy skills. The study also showed that in some cases the Reading Room closed when pupils wanted to use it. Besides, the librarian in certain cases was overwhelmed with other school responsibilities, thereby making it difficult for him to make the Reading Room accessible to the pupils.

##### **d) Lack of collaboration by class teachers**

The findings showed that lack of collaboration by some teachers was a challenge to pupils on the literacy program. Respondents noted that some subject teachers did not work together with the school librarian. In the long run, a good number of pupils were denied the many privileges of accessing the school Reading Room and the benefits of participating in several literacy events.

#### **e) Teacher librarians overwhelming load**

The study further showed that overwhelming load and insufficient training was a deterrent factor for pupil's full use and benefit of the Reading Room. The study also unveiled the fact that overwhelming loads by some school librarians resulted in their failure to effectively and efficiently perform their main job as librarians. The study also revealed that this trend discouraged pupils from going to the Reading Room to study when they were free. The study also concluded that this situation created an impediment to the cultivation of reading habits in the learners even when there were good collections available and the school librarian's spirit was willing.

#### **f) Insufficient allocation of library sessions on time table**

It was evident from the study findings that there was insufficient time allocated to library activities for classes on the class timetable.

#### **g) Donated books depicted foreign culture**

The study also established that most of the donated books in some Reading Rooms were British and depicted British culture that confused and bored the pupils.

### **5.5 Summary of the chapter**

The chapter presented the discussion of the study findings regarding the impact of Reading Rooms on literacy development among basic school pupils in Chongwe District, Zambia. Responses of participants were analyzed. Firstly, the role of the library resources in enhancing literacy skills among pupils was laid bare. Thereafter, the effects of Reading Room activities and events on pupils reading culture were deliberated. This was followed by a discussion of the assessment of performance of pupils on the Reading Room literacy program. Lastly, the challenges encountered by the pupils on the Reading Room literacy program were considered. The chapter also demonstrated how reviewed literature related to

the objectives of this study. The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations made in light of the findings.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.0 Overview**

The previous chapter discussed the findings. This particular chapter is a summary of the study findings and ends with recommendations.

#### **6.1 Conclusions**

The study demonstrated that library resources played a fundamental role in enhancing literacy skills. The study findings revealed that provision of interesting and comprehensible reading materials made reading a pleasant experience. On the other hand, the school relied on the Reading Room resources to develop creativity and reasoning skills in learners. The study showed that school Reading Rooms were a fulcrum of literacy development in rural areas.

The study findings indicated that the school library made a unique contribution to the encouragement and development of voluntary reading. It is the task of the school librarian to give every pupil a chance to make the most of his or her reading potential by intentionally creating a reading environment. Besides, the study established that school Reading Rooms had an important role to play in equalizing access to books and other library resources for the rural child.

In terms of activities/literacy events of the Reading Room meant to improve pupils reading culture, the study indicated that learners on the literacy program had developed a positive attitude towards reading.

Moreover, the study findings point to the fact that at the centre of the curriculum was a lot of reading, listening, speaking and writing, with pupils experiencing many books and literacy activities/ events at their disposal. The learners as individuals or as a class were motivated to

read or write once they were exposed to a literate environment provided by the school Reading Room and a trained teacher librarian. In addition, the many literacy events/activities of the Reading Rooms provided rich literacy experiences for the pupils that participated. In this vein, the Reading Rooms played a key role in creating literate environments and promoting literacy by offering relevant and attractive reading materials for all ages and all literacy levels.

Further, the study showed that many literacy events/activities of the Reading Rooms provided rich literacy experiences for the pupils that participated in them. It also established that Reading Rooms supported the curriculum and had an impact on student learning. It also came to light that pupil's used library resources to gather information for class projects, recreational reading and were able to recognise the availability of specific resources relevant to their needs.

Additionally, findings of the study revealed that Reading Rooms had a vital role to play in the reading patterns of those pupils who had higher literacy levels. Respondents also said that pupils that used the Reading Room tended to hold more positive attitudes towards reading and learning than those that did not use it. Furthermore, the library resources were said to stimulate communication. Another interesting finding was that pupils read beyond what was required in their free time and were more confident in their reading.

The findings also unveiled that the implementation of the Reading Rooms provided opportunity for pupils to demonstrate independent research skills and a more student centred approach to learning. The school librarian contributed to pupil's academic achievement by shaping the Reading Room collection and collaborating with classroom teachers. Reading Rooms therefore play a cardinal role in providing enrichment to learners who needed additional help to develop literacy skills. Creativity and development of language skills improved as pupils actively participated in the school Reading Room literacy events/

activities (i.e the colourful story trains displayed in the Reading Rooms, Reading and short story writing competitions and book title recognition competitions).

The study established that school Reading Rooms supported classroom activities, provided supplementary reading materials and reinforced teachers programs. Pupil's exposure to Reading Rooms enabled them discover the joy of reading and writing. The pupils reading culture was rejuvenated. Consequently, a significant general improvement in reading, comprehension and writing skills had an impact on learning and performance in all the other curriculum subjects.

The study findings pointed to the fact that school Reading Rooms provided a literate environment conducive for the enhancement of intellectual and academic career of pupils. The study also revealed that in the school Reading Rooms, learners engaged in information searching and retrieval to incorporate inquiry and critical thinking. The study also found out that school Reading Rooms also provided a good atmosphere for teamwork among the learners with a strong focus on productivity and personal growth. However, lack of a school Reading Room negatively impacted literacy development.

As regards the performance of the pupils on the literacy program, the experimental findings of the study showed that pupils in schools with Reading Rooms performed (significantly) better than their counterparts in the control group. This finding underscores the impact of School Reading Rooms on literacy development (particularly for pupils who lack books and other reading materials in their daily lives).The school Reading Rooms therefore played a cardinal role in enhancing the acquisition of pupil's literacy skills. The study findings indicated that in schools with Reading Rooms, pupils performed significantly better in reading comprehension. Further, the study revealed that there was a positive relationship/link between the presence of a school Reading Room and student achievement. The study also established that more reading and writing occurred when there was a school Reading Room.

An ANOVA Regression Analysis showed that extra training of teachers by program implementers' contributed (55.8%) positively to pupil's performance in the literacy skills test. The significance was very high as reflected in the statistical findings. Therefore, teacher training had a significant influence on pupil's performance. This implies that teachers that received extra training had a positive bearing on the performance of pupils.

The ANOVA test results also showed that the contribution of materials (33.7%) had little bearing compared to extra training of teachers by program implementers (55.8%). Pupils may have the appropriate materials and just look at them. They need teachers that are trained to guide them by providing the necessary support and information that they need.

The other extraneous variables that included time on task and school culture were constant. The pupils in the District all spent 4 hours in school. The study showed that the pupils reported at the same time and spent the same time in school daily. School culture also remained constant in all the schools. Study findings revealed that all the class teachers in the basic schools under study were Diploma holders.

Concerning the challenges encountered by the pupils on the Reading Room Literacy Program, a number of them were revealed by the study. The salient ones included; lack of collaboration by class teachers, insufficient funding of school Reading Rooms, teacher librarians overwhelming workload, librarian negative attitude, small size of Reading Rooms, insufficient allocation of library sessions on class time-tables.

Basic education in Zambia is concerned with maximizing a quality literate environment for quality reading and writing experience for pupils. Consequentially, there is need to make reading materials available together with trained school librarians in every school Reading Room. With adequate investment and funding, school Reading Rooms will have a major positive impact on the promotion of literacy and ultimately the achievement of Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals. Zambia, in particular, will have a population

that not only can read but will read, write, speak and listen intelligently. However, this calls for a willingness to commit scarce resources towards the support of school Reading Rooms and trained librarians.

Further, the research revealed that schools with Reading Rooms in place were satisfied with the services offered by Room to Read Zambia. The research findings revealed that the major objectives of the Room to Read Literacy program had been achieved. To sum it all, Reading Rooms are a potent factor in literacy development.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

Arising from the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- a) The Zambian situation calls for more funding of school libraries by the Government.
- b) In order to express and record local culture, knowledge and research to translate relevant material into indigenous languages, it is important to have a strong local publishing industry. School librarians have to collaborate and network with the local publishing industry for the effective strengthening of the local book chain. It is cardinal for pupils to see themselves in what they are reading. Local newspapers as well as school newsletters in indigenous languages should be promoted.
- d) School Reading Rooms are the logical access points and support centres for school literacy programs, hence the need for school administrators and teacher librarians to provide a wide range of activities, with a focus to develop literacy skills and inculcate a reading culture in the learners.
- e) In order for school libraries to play a role in the learner's literacy environment and support voluntary reading, there is need for the Zambian Government to build more school libraries especially in the rural parts of the country.
- e) The Ministry of Education Science, Vocational Training and Early Education in collaboration with the Zambia Library Service must train and deploy more qualified

librarians in order to promote effective management of school libraries countrywide.

g) Technology is advancing in today's global world, hence the need for more workshops on

the importance and role of libraries by the Zambia Library Service in collaboration

with the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education.

h) There is need for continued support by donors in the promotion of school Reading

Rooms, especially in rural areas. Book Aid International (BAI) in the United Kingdom and

the Canadian Organisation for Development through Education (CODE) are some of the

groups that can partner with some of the rural schools in this regard.

### **6.3 Summary of the Chapter**

Chapter six presented the conclusion and recommendations of the study. The conclusion was based on the research objectives of the study, while the recommendations were drawn from the findings.

The study concluded that apart from providing a literate environment that helped pupils develop positive attitudes towards reading and writing, school Reading Rooms impacted positively on literacy development. Regarding the performance of the pupils, the study established that pupils exposed to a school Reading Room performed better than those that did not have one. Besides, it was found that these Reading Rooms were used by teachers as a resource centre. The study also showed that school librarians were trained and collaborated with teachers in helping pupils improve their reading and writing skills.

The study also concluded that reading room activities/events were meaningful, relevant and purposeful because they enabled pupils discover the joy of reading and writing. The study further concluded that there was a relationship between school Reading Rooms and literacy development.

Recommendations were also suggested. These included the need for school administrators and teacher librarians to provide a wide range of local reading materials and a wide range of activities; government to increase funding for school libraries; and that government together with school administrators ought to train and re-train school librarians in an effort to reduce on their teaching load.

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## APPENDIX 1

### TIMELINES AND SUBMISSIBLES

#### Submissible

- a. **Research Report-** This will be the final submissible to be handed in quadruplicate by 31 September, 2012.
- b. **Data Collection Instruments:** These included interview guides for DEBS Officials and School librarians, a test for pupils and questionnaires for teachers and head teachers. These will be submitted as appendices together with the research report. These will show the kind of data that was elicited and ensure that the data collected was in line with the initial objectives.
- c. **Progress Reports:** These were made available monthly in an agreed upon format which began in February, 2012 when the researcher went for data collection. This kept the supervisor informed of the progress of the research at any point.
- d. **Chapters of the Final Report:** When the researcher began to compile the final report, chapters were submitted to the supervisor at agreed upon intervals.

## APPENDIX 2

### SCHEDULE

ACTIVITY TIME LINE			
CORE ACTIVITIES	DETAILS OF ACTIVITY	DURATION	DATES
<b>PROPOSAL WRITING</b>	a. Review of literature b. Designing of research instruments	2 months	September to 16 <sup>th</sup> December , 2011.
<b>Data collection</b>	a. Questionnaires b. Interviews c. Test	11/2 Months	20 <sup>th</sup> January to 29 <sup>th</sup> February, 2012.
<b>Data analysis</b>	Preparation, presentation, organization and analysis of data	1 Month	1 <sup>st</sup> March to 31 <sup>st</sup> March, 2012.
<b>Report preparation</b>	Report Writing, Typing and Editing	1 Month	6 <sup>th</sup> April to 21 <sup>st</sup> May, 2012.
<b>Report production</b>	Proof Reading, Production and Submission of Final Draft.	1Month	22 <sup>nd</sup> May to 31 <sup>st</sup> September, 2012.

**The University of Zambia  
Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies  
School of Education  
Department of Language and Social Sciences Education  
Master of Education in Literacy and Learning**

Dear Respondent,

I am a student at the University of Zambia pursuing a Master of Education Degree in Literacy and Learning. I am conducting a research to find out the effect of the Reading Rooms on literacy development in Chongwe district. To this end, I am requesting you to participate in this exercise by responding to questions in this interview guide.

I wish to assure you that the information you provide me will be used for academic work only.

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DEBS OFFICIALS**

Serial NO.....

DATE: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

- 
1. When were the Reading Rooms introduced in your area?
  2. What are the objectives of the Reading Rooms?
  3. Were there any librarian/ teacher trainings done prior to the establishment of these Reading Rooms in your area?
  4. In your view, do you think Reading Rooms have an effect on pupil's literacy development?
  5. From your observation, how can you describe the pupils' attitude towards the Reading Rooms?
  6. Comment on the reading culture of the pupils involved in the RR programme.
  7. What challenges are faced by pupils on the Reading Room literacy program?
  8. In your view, do you think the objectives of the Reading Room literacy program have been attained?
  9. Suggest some of the measures required in order to promote literacy and inculcate a reading culture in rural basic schools.

**We have now come to the end of the interview. I wish to thank you for finding time and sparing effort to participate in this exercise.**

**Masala High School,  
Box 230062, Ndola.**

**Cell Number- 0966787649**

**The University of Zambia**  
**Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies**  
**School of Education**  
**Department of Language and Social Sciences Education**  
**Master of Education in Literacy and Learning.**

Dear Respondent,

I am a student at the University of Zambia persuing a Master of Education Degree in Literacy and Learning. I am conducting a research to find out the effect of the Reading Rooms on literacy development in Chongwe district. To this end, I am requesting you to participate in this exercise by responding to questions in this questionnaire.

I wish to assure you that the information you provide me will be used for academic work only.

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL HEADS AND TEACHERS.**

**SECTION A**

1. Name the institution or school you work for -----  
-----
2. Name the district/town where you live -----
3. State your current position in this school-----  
-----
4. State your highest educational qualification -----
5. When was the Reading Room established in your school?-----
6. State the grades that are benefiting from the Reading Rooms in your school-----  
-----

**SECTION B**

7. List the activities of the Reading Rooms-----  
-----  
-----
8. What are the effects of library resources on pupils reading culture?-----  
-----
9. How accessible are the Reading Rooms to pupils?-----
10. Have you time-tabled the use of the Reading Rooms?-----
11. How conducive is the Reading Room for pupils in your school?-----
12. How can you describe the attitude of pupils towards the Reading Rooms?-----  
-----  
-----
13. Generally, what is the academic performance of pupils on the Room to Read literacy program?-----  
-----
14. What do you think about the levels of literacy of the pupils on the Literacy Programme? -----
15. What are the challenges faced by the pupils on the Reading Room Literacy Program?
16. Comment on the reading culture of the pupils after the establishment of the Reading Room in your school.....

.....  
.....  
17. In your view, do you think the objectives of the Room to Read Literacy Program  
have been achieved?-----  
-----

18. Suggest some of the measures required in order to improve the reading culture among  
pupils in basic school-----  
-----  
-----

**We have now come to the end of this questionnaire. I wish to thank you for finding time  
to participate in this exercise.**

**Masala High School,  
Box 230062, Ndola.**

**Cell Number- 0966787649**

**The University of Zambia  
Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies  
School of Education  
Department of Language and Social Sciences Education  
Master of Education in Literacy and Learning.**

Dear Respondent,

I am a student at the University of Zambia pursuing a Master of Education Degree in Literacy and Learning. I am conducting a research to find out the effect of the Reading Rooms on literacy development in Chongwe district. To this end, I am requesting you to participate in this exercise by responding to questions in this interview guide.

I wish to assure you that the information you provide me will be used for academic work only.

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LIBRARIAN**

1. How often do pupils come to the library?
2. What kind of materials/activities do your Reading Rooms offer?
3. What effects do the Reading Room Literacy activities have on pupils reading culture?
4. How conducive are the Reading Rooms for the pupils?
5. What is the attitude of pupils towards Reading Rooms?
6. Where you trained to manage Reading Rooms?
7. Is there any change in the reading culture of the pupils that use Reading Rooms?
8. What are the challenges faced by pupils on the Reading Room Literacy program?
9. In your view, do you think the Reading Rooms have helped promote literacy among pupils?

**We have now come to the end of this interview. I wish to thank you for finding time and sparing effort to participate in this exercise.**

## APPENDIX 3

### RESEARCH BUDGET

No	Category	Details	Qty	Cost	Total Cost
<b>1</b>	<b>Stationary</b>	Reams of paper	<b>02</b>	30,000	60,000
		Pens	<b>10</b>	10,000	10,000
		Box file	<b>02</b>	15,000	30,000
					<b>100,000</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Equipment</b>	Camera	<b>01</b>	2,000,000	2,000,000
		Flash disks	<b>02</b>	250,000	500,000
					<b>2,500,000</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Transport</b>	To and from Chongwe		1,000,000	1,000,000
		Lusaka (consultation)		2,000,000	2,000,000
					<b>3,000,000</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Allowances</b>	Lunch during data collection and analysis		2,000,000	<b>2,000,000</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Printing costs</b>	Printing and binding	<b>04</b>	65,000	<b>260,000</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>			1000,000	<b>1000,000</b>
<b>Grand total</b>					<b>8,860,000</b>

## APPENDIX 4

### **Informed Consent Form**

#### **Dear Respondent,**

My name is Chisenga Caroline. I am currently a student of the University of Zambia pursuing a Master of Education in Literacy and Learning. This research is a major requirement for the completion of my programme. Thus this exercise is purely academic.

#### **1. Purpose**

The researcher wishes to find out the effect of the Reading Rooms on literacy Development in Chongwe district.

#### **2. Consent**

Participating in this exercise is voluntary. You are free to decline to participate in this exercise.

#### **3. Confidentiality**

All data collected from this research is treated with ultimate confidentiality. Participants are assured that they will remain anonymous and untraceable in this research.

#### **2. Rights of Respondents**

All efforts will be taken to ensure that the rights of the participants are protected and respected. Participants are assured that they shall suffer no harm as a result of participating in this exercise. Participants are free to ask for clarification at any point of the exercise and to inform the researcher if they feel uncomfortable about any procedure in the research.

#### **3. Declaration of Consent**

I have read and fully understand this document. I therefore agree/disagree to participate in this exercise.

Signature

.....

Date

...../...../2012

**APPENDIX 5**

**GRADE FIVE CLASS TEST**

**Instructions:**

Answer all the questions.

In section A, write your answers in the spaces provided.

In section B, write your answers on the separate paper provided.

**Duration : 45 minutes**

**Section A**

1. Change the words below to plural.

- a) Box -----
- b) Match -----
- c) Watch -----
- d) Echo -----

(4marks).

2. Fill in the gaps with the correct form of the verb in the brackets.

Last year Mwaba ----- (decide) to plant some maize on his farm. He ----- (plough) the farm and -----(dig) some lines in which he put some fertilizer; he ----- (spend) a whole afternoon planting. When he had ----- (finish), he was happy with the work he had ----- (do). He -----(go) back to his house and -----(sleep) .

(8marks).

4. Write 10 words using the letters of the word in the box.

everything
------------


(10marks)

4. Complete the sentences below

- a) I cut the oranges into ----- equal parts. (for; four)

- b) The little boy ----- a giraffe. (saw; so)  
c) The boy -----like to walk with you. (would; wood)  
d) -----were three girls in the classroom. (their; there)

(4 marks)

5. Punctuate the following paragraphs. Remember to add capital letters, full stops and commas.

When Mutale came home he sang his song to let Tendai know that it was safe to open the door sister sister sister dear open the door Mutale is here then Tendai opened the door she was glad to see that Mutale had a fine big fish from the river to cook for their dinner.

(10marks)

### **Section B : Reading Comprehension.**

Instruction: Read the following passage and answer the question below.

#### **Trees.**

Trees are good for people and the environment. They give us the shade that we need when it is hot. They give us air that we breathe. Trees also protect the rivers and the soil. Most people do not know how important tree are to them. They cut them down and burn them. They forget that they get a lot of things from these trees. Some trees are used as medicine by people. Trees are also good for animals, birds and insects. Some animals live in trees while most birds make their nests in them. Some animals and birds feed on fruits and leaves that grow on trees. It is not good to cut down trees.

**Write 5 uses of trees from the text.**

(10 marks)