

(RE)THINKING AND
(RE)POSITIONING LIBRARY
PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES IN
PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN LIMPOPO
PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

LIMPOPO PROVINCE



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- Limpopo is the northernmost province in South Africa.
- It is one of the mostly rural provinces such as Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.
- It is a merger of two former self-governing homelands, Lebowa and Gazankulu, and former independent state, Venda.
- All homelands were designated for Africans (black people) under Apartheid rule.
- It is named after the Limpopo River that flows across the province; the name Limpopo has its etymological origin from the Sesotho sa Leboa word diphororo tsa meetse –strong gushing waterfalls

- The province is more than 89 per cent rural and, as in most other provinces in South Africa, it is characterised by high rates of poverty because of high rates of unemployment amongst its black inhabitants (Provide 2009; StatsSA 2013).
- The province has the highest level of poverty, with 78.9 per cent of the population living below the national poverty line.

- StatsSA (2012, 43) found that Limpopo remained the province with the lowest average annual household income at R56 844, followed by Eastern Cape where the average was R64 539. At the other end of the scale, Gauteng had the highest average annual household income at R156 243 followed by Western Cape with a figure of R143 460.
- The province is vast and according to StatsSA (2013), its population is 97.1 per cent black.
- As in other rural provinces of the country, there are huge inequalities in the distribution of income between the various racial groupings.





- Well-designed and well-planned library school programmes and services are essential to improve the development of reading and information literacy skills, particularly of the learners, which are crucial for the acquisition of life-long learning and independent study and accessing skills.
- However, because of inadequate and inefficient school library services in most South African schools, teachers and learners are deprived of opportunities to benefit and practically learn library programmes essential for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, competencies, values and orientations. They are also denied fundamental library services due to them.
- Based on one part of the research project which investigated the resource provision in public high schools in Limpopo province, South Africa, this presentation highlights status quo of the programmes and services offered by the different library facilities in public high schools in province.

STATUS OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA (NEIMS 2011)

Province	%
Western Cape	25
Gauteng	18,4
Free State	8,8
North West	6,4
KwaZulu-Natal	6,1
Mpumalanga	6,1
Eastern Cape	2,9
Northern Cape	2,3
Limpopo	2,3
NATIONAL	7,2

CHALLENGES

- PROVISION OF RURAL EDUCATION

The government is faced with a host of circumstantial challenges in the provision of rural education to the majority of the schools particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged and marginalised rural communities.

- Seroto (2011) outlines the challenges associated with the provision of rural education in historically disadvantaged black schools which were calculatedly under-resourced by the apartheid government before 1994.
- The majority of these schools have been declared no or low fee-paying schools and are categorised either in quintiles 1 to 3 because of the poor socio-economic backgrounds of their communities (DBE 2015; Dwane 2010)

The vast number of schools in the province are characterised by:

- **INFRASTRUCTURAL BACKLOGS**
- **LACK OF DECENT, STANDARDISED, WELL RESOURCED, WELL-STAFFED LIBRARIES; AND WELL-EQUIPPED LABORATORIES.**

ROADS

- Masoga (2013) confirms that the majority (68%) of the roads in Limpopo province are gravel roads.

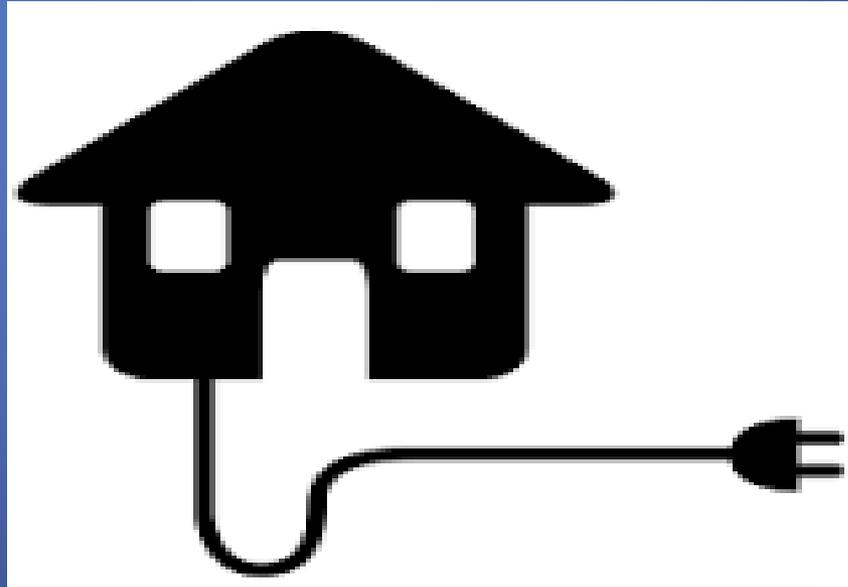


INSUFFICIENT TEXTBOOKS IN SCHOOLS



ELECTRICITY

**SOME COMMUNITIES STILL
DO NOT HAVE ELECTRICITY.**



INTERNET



- Internet accessibility is a serious challenge. StatsSA (2013) maintains that only 1.8 per cent of the population has access to the Internet in their households in the whole country.

METHODOLOGY

As already alluded to, this presentation is part of a larger study which investigated the provision of school libraries in public high schools in Limpopo province, South Africa. Although the study had elements of qualitative research because all three education officials attached to the School Library Unit in Polokwane were interviewed, the quantitative study design (survey) was mainly or largely adopted. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from the principals or teacher-librarians.

The research questions for principals or teacher-librarians were:

- Which library programmes and services are offered in schools?

To what the extent are identified library programmes and services offered in schools?

For education officials, the research questions were formulated as follows:

Which library programmes and services are offered to the teachers and learners by the Limpopo Department of Basic Education?

Does the Department of Education support the celebration of Readathon or Literacy Month?

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS

- According to the Limpopo Department of Basic Education's Annual Survey Update Master (Limpopo. DBE 2015), there are 1 428 registered public high schools which are scattered in all five districts of the province. To obtain a sample size relative to the size of the wider population under study, 'a look-up table for sample sizes from different sized universes' was used (Payne and Payne 2004, 204). According to Payne and Payne, if the target population comprises 1 500 units of analysis, then the sample should be 306. As the target population in this study was 1 428 state high schools, a total of 306 public high schools in the province was targeted.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Two sampling techniques were used, namely, stratified and systematic random sampling.

Firstly, a stratified sampling technique was applied (Keyton 2011). Two lists of schools were created – a rural and an urban school list.

Secondly, a systematic random sampling technique was applied to both rural and urban school sampling frames to ensure fair distribution and selection of schools in each stratum .

SAMPLE SIZE

From the list of 1 265 (89%) rural schools, 254 schools were chosen randomly. From a total of 163 (11%) urban schools, 52 schools were selected randomly. Self-administered questionnaires with self-addressed envelopes were mailed to the 306 principals or teacher-librarians.

RESPONSE RATE

There was a response rate of 163 schools, 118 rural schools and 45 urban schools.

Other respondents included three education officials all attached to the School Library Unit. Due to the virtue of their appointments, they were selected through purposive sampling. They are employed and paid by the Limpopo DBE and their main function is to assist schools to set up functional libraries in the province. An interview schedule was used to conduct face-to-face interviews to obtain qualitative data from them.

Library programmes and services	Number of rural schools	%	Number of urban schools	%	Cumulative totals	Cumulative %	Cumulative totals of schools which did not respond	%
1. Reading programmes	14	12	4	9	18	11	145	89
2. Information literacy skills and programmes	2	2	3	7	5	3	158	97
3. Marketing of library activities	1	1	1	2	2	1	161	99
4. Library programmes	1	1	2	4	3	2	160	98
5. Outreach programmes and competitions	4	3	0	0	4	2	159	98
6. Celebrations of library calendar days	5	4	4	9	9	6	154	94
Number of respondents	118	100	45	100	163	100	163	100

Reading programmes

- This findings imply that there are no reading programmes in the vast majority of the public schools in Limpopo province to motivate learners specifically to acquire, improve and inculcate reading habits, skills and culture. This coincides with inadequate and dysfunctional library services in most of the schools in the province.

- Jansen (2013) as quoted by Hart (2014, 3) describes our literacy levels as a “national disaster”.
- Less than 10% of the population have access to library resources in public and community libraries

Responses from officials

Education official A:

We are encouraging teacher-librarians to motivate learners to read, however, there are no tailored reading programmes related to libraries including school libraries.

Education official B:

During few workshops we had, teacher-librarians were encouraged to motivate learners to read.

Education official C:

Reading is important for learners to acquire reading skills. Without budget, we are not able to organise reading competitions for learners in different schools to take part. However, we encourage schools to celebrate Readathon in September. Due to lack of budget we cannot organise anything.

Information literacy skills and programmes

The findings imply that a majority of the teachers and learners in most schools lack information literacy skills in this digital era to search information on their own.

Marketing of library facilities

The findings indicate that majority of the library facilities are not marketed to make potential users aware of them.

The National Guidelines for School Library and Information Services (2012, 29) confirms that:

“School library and Information service provided by the school library must be actively promoted so that the target groups are always aware of the library’s essential role as a partner in learning and teaching and as a gateway to all kinds of information sources.”

Library programmes

- This implies that the majority of the teachers and learners lack knowledge about library procedures, organisation and retrieval of information sources, library rules and policies.
- Adeoti-Adekeye (1997, 587) contends that:

A library period should be created in the school time-table for a class to be with the librarian or teacher-librarian in the library for the purpose of receiving instruction in library use.

Responses from officials

Education official A:

During few workshops we conducted, we encouraged teacher-librarians to teach learners library programmes for them to search curriculum-related information independently. Unfortunately, there is no time.

Education official B:

Few schools with libraries may offer such programmes, but majority cannot because there are no (functional) libraries in most schools. Teacher-librarians are in classes full-time, no time for such programmes.

Education official C:

Most schools lack libraries. There are no library periods in most schools to offer library related programmes, only teaching.

-

Outreach programmes and competitions

Out of 45, no urban school respondent replied to the question. It is well-documented that school and public or community libraries can work together to encourage learners to have competitions (South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2012). The aim should be to encourage learners to use as many library-based resources as possible to inspire the acquisition and imparting of specific skills in them.

REPOSSES FROM OFFICIALS

Education official A:

We encourage schools to participate in outreach programmes and competitions for the benefit of the learners. The Unit cannot organise competitions and outreach programmes due to lack of budget.

Education official B:

Schools are encouraged to take part in outreach programmes for learners' sake. We cannot organise competitions for schools due to lack of budget.

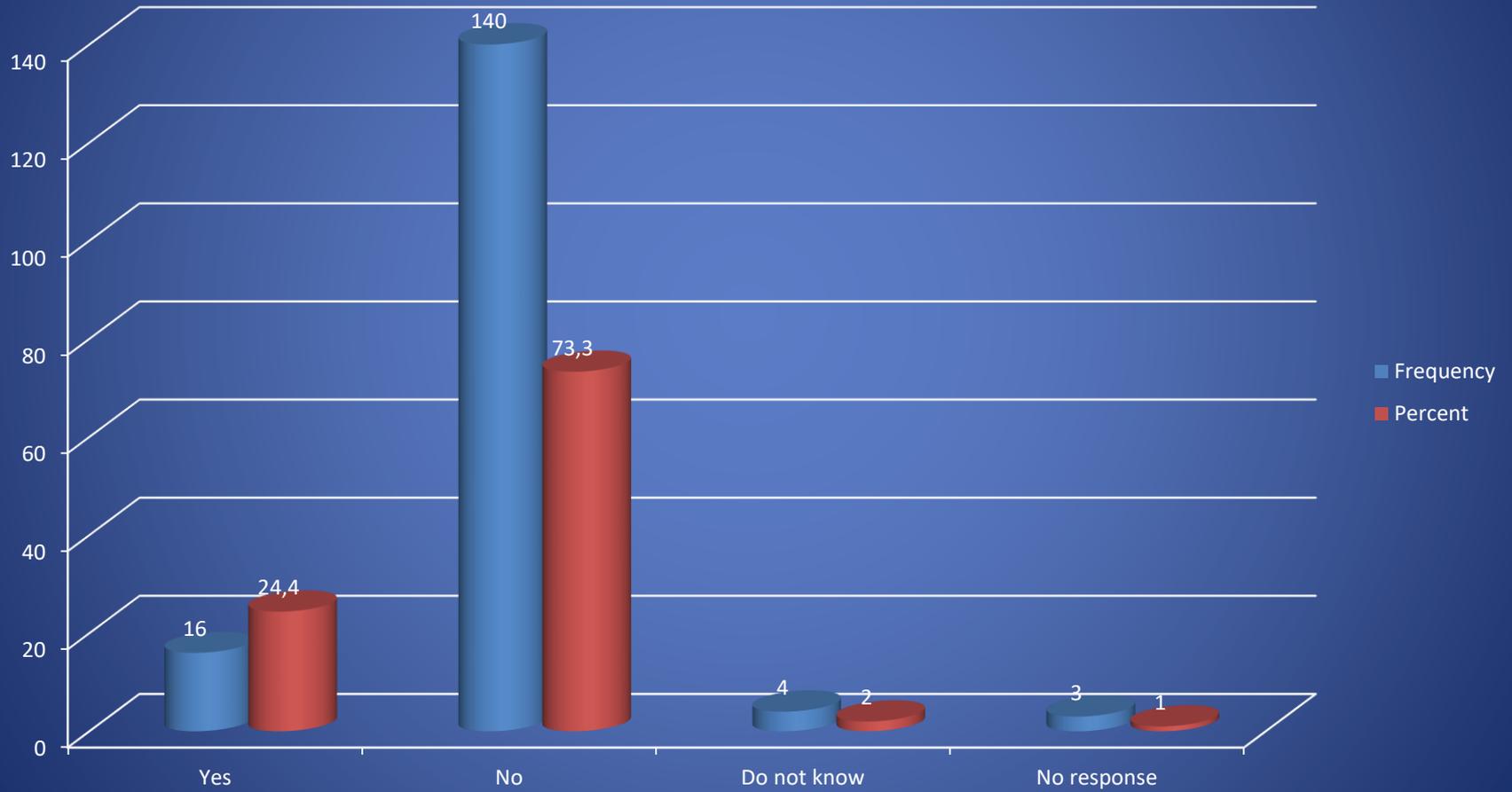
Education official C:

There is lack of manpower in the School Library Unit. We are only three officials responsible for all primary and high schools in the province. This is a tedious job.

Celebrations of library calendar days

- out of 163, only nine (6%) respondents indicated that their schools celebrate library calendar days. Learners and teachers are supposed to know that on such days they will be commemorating or celebrating calendar days such as South Africa Library Week, World Book Day, Mother-Tongue, Readathon and World Aids Day.

READATHON CELEBRARIONS



Responses from officials

Education official A:

We encourage schools to celebrate Literacy Month in September annually. Without budget, there is nothing we can do.

Education official B:

We issue a circular to make schools aware of the Readathon celebrations. We used to send brochures and flyers to schools to encourage Readathon celebrations, however, due to lack of budget now, we cannot.

Education official C:

Schools choose their days to celebrate Readathon in September annually

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the *National Guidelines for School Library and Information Services* (2012) be amended [to compel and sanction Department of Basic of Education to provide funding and staffing for school libraries] and converted into a legislated school library policy for the successful implementation of such library programmes and services.

Schools should have a slot on the time-table to ensure that well-designed and well-spelt-out school library programmes, activities and services are successfully implemented for the benefit of teachers and learners.

Qualified, trained and dedicated teacher-librarians need to be employed in all schools for programmes and services to be successfully implemented for the benefit of teachers and learners.

-

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings indicate the status quo of library programmes and services in public high schools in Limpopo province.

No attempt was done to determine specifically literacy levels of learners in sampled schools.

THE END

