

# THE STORM SHELTER UGANDA



## LIBRARY PROJECT REPORT

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joy Rate M Ochwo', written over a horizontal line.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## **1. Introduction:**

The storm Shelter Uganda is a Women Led Community Based Organization with head offices and areas of operation in Bugiri District. Our interventions focus on well being of entire communities especially women, girls and children. We are keen on women's overall well being, mental health and rights. The storm shelter Uganda currently is partnering with Uganda Reproductive Health bureau in provision of psycho social and nutrition counseling to women and girls living with HIV/AIDS who receive their treatment and care at the facility. We are also working with Enjuba, Africa Library project, Bugiri District library and Kyetume Community based Health Care program to implement a community library project in Bugiri District.

## **2. Context analysis**

Only two million Ugandans have access to internet services. In this world where information is required by everyone at all levels, community libraries in Uganda have gone ahead to serve all categories of persons in different communities including children, youth, adults, and the elderly. Majority of these community libraries are managed by non-professional librarians. Need identification becomes a challenge and therefore teachers, users and parents have to be involved in the selection and acquisition process to help identify the best information resources for use. Library services are offered to schools, business communities, women's groups, farmers, refugees and many more. In as much as Bugiri district has a library, the resource in the library and the space is inadequate to reach out to the entire population of Bugiri district. Also, the population is too busy living. Women and people young especially do not have enough time and the resources to move to the district library to get the information they need.

The Storm Shelter Uganda, now (Storm shelter Initiatives Uganda) plans to offer support through mapping and formation of reading groups in communities, identifying partners that can support the donation of reading material, mobilise and allocate information to reading groups, monitor and evaluate performance of community reading groups as well as create networks and linkages. The Storm Shelter Uganda does not work independently while doing its work. It partners with like-minded organizations and individuals to perform its duties to meet goals and objectives.

In the last quarter, the project received 1492 books from the Africa Library project through Enjuba and 500 others from Freedom project in Iganga. The projects original plan was (and still is) to set up a resource center in Bugiri district. Because of the need to cover a wider area and reach a bigger population, it has adopted the concept of community libraries as a strategy. The project shall in this quarter map out one reading group in the community first pilot the concept and then duplicate the lessons learnt with the other groups in the subsequent quarters.

In our proposal to Africa library project, the project had suggested its preferred category of books. However, when we opened the boxes, 500 of the books were readers books that in our opinion would find better use in schools. The project therefore decided to give the 500 books to schools. Nakavule Lutheran Primary School in Nakavule Parish received 50 books and Cornerstone Nursery and Primary School received 160 books. There are 290 books in store to donate to schools. The project will conduct library monitoring from time to time to ensure that the books in schools are being put into good use. The other category books contained different subjects; Leadership, Mental Health and personal development. The majority though are novels and fact books. These the project shall retain in the library for project use. The project is currently in negotiation with Straight Talk foundation, Uganda Aids Commission and Ministry of Health to support it with more literature. Currently a project volunteer is undertaking a two weeks learning exchange at Bugiri district library to foster the partnership and to build capacity to manage the community libraries.



***Pupils of Cornerstone Nursery and Primary schools utilizing the books in their library***

### Expected challenges

- The community libraries have a unique niche in the category of people they serve. The literacy levels of some beneficiaries is very low.
- Readers have varied interests. Mobilising literature to satisfy all interests is very challenging.
- Since most books are soft cover, some of them might get destroyed in the communities and schools
- Inadequate skills and knowledge on library management of the volunteers in the community
- The project does not have enough shelves for all the mobilised literature

### Proposed solutions.

- There is much need for training of community library volunteers in basic library management skills, provision of relevant information materials which best suit the needs and wants of users, creating awareness about the importance of libraries and their services.
- There is need for book reading sessions for those with low literacy levels. The project is in the process of exploring how well this can work



*Personal development books on the project shelf and novels lying unshelved in the project store*



*Cover picture: Pupils in Nakavule Lutheran School exploring the new book collection in their library*