

TRAINING FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL MANAGERS AND TEACHERS

In August 2008 fifteen thousand new, colourful reading books were gifted to voluntary education authorities in Cameroon. In September seminars were held for the school managers responsible for the recipient schools - more than 250 primary and nursery schools with >60,000 pupils. There were two regional seminars, in Limbe and Bamenda. Seminars were delivered by the CBC education Secretary, Tetevi Bodylawson (the only face common to both photos are the bottom of page). The focus was using the books, creatively, to increase basic education. Seminar participants read the books, identified and discussed vocabulary and language concepts that can be taught, they analysed the story to pick out messages that could be used for moral and environmental education. As well as use of the books as a pedagogic tool, managers were briefed on the organisation of local seminars to pass on their learning to head and class room teachers in their areas. The managers were instructed to hold seminars with all the head teachers under their jurisdiction, while the head teachers were expected to do the same with their teachers.



The system worked, and feedback from each level, after 7 weeks of using the books in schools, is inspiring. Reports on the seminar for managers include personal learning and reflections as well as classroom pedagogic issues addressing how the materials would be used with students, and the anticipated impact on students. Feedback and comment from head and class room teachers showed perhaps the most individuality and innovation in uses and interpretation of the books and it's story or messages.



Most schools reported that they use the books two to three times a week, some specified the days, eg, every Tuesday and Thursday. Some specify classes 4-6, some in junior classes (3 and 4) for reading English, and senior classes for other, eg in clubs. They are also used in geography and environmental education and English reading clubs 'it has been used like a story book and for picture interpretation. "Children have used new vocabulary like graduate, communicate, psychology." The books are used for



teaching of comprehension, grammar, punctuation, parts of speech, for identification of sets of objects, for use of colour and interpretation. They are used for pre-reading children, using storytelling approach.

Teachers and students made much of the moral lessons and life skills learned from the books, 'the book builds up people morally' 'it teaches unconditional love.' Class 6 children wrote that 'I have seen the importance of loving somebody,' 'I have learned that it is good to give somebody something that the person likes,' 'it is good to be patient.'

Teachers commented that 'the book is more interesting than the readers pupils have, motivating them to read, even on their own. The books were appreciated, have extended basic education, reading and language skills, inspired teachers and students alike, and made learning easier.

