

Infusing professionalism in school libraries to improve reading culture in the community : a case of Remnant Vision School Kitengela, Kajiado County, Kenya

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This research presents a study of Remnant Vision School (RVS), which, though it has a designated library space, neither has appropriate books nor a trained librarian. This being a mission school, it aims at influencing the surrounding community and, in the past, opened its doors to welcome not only its pupils but also other school-going children in the community for holiday self-reading sessions. However, this was not sustained, and eventually, the sessions ended, and the children were left to their own devices. The paper sought to establish gaps and challenges faced by school libraries and suggest solutions that could help the school library thrive and achieve the goal of influencing reading at the young age of primary school-going children. To gain in-depth and contextual knowledge of the Remnant Vision School library, the study made use of a Case study research design and explored the application of a mixed research approach. The population of the study was 392 (369 pupils and 23 teachers), out of whom a sample of 54 respondents (13.8%) was selected using stratified purposeful sampling. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, interviews, and observation schedules and thematically analysed for qualitative data, while graphs, pie charts, and frequency tables were used to present quantitative data. Gaps were identified, such as irrelevant collection and inexistent library policies and structures that would ensure the smooth running of the library. Children are expectant and interested in reading, while the school administration has genuine concerns about operationalising the library and is ready to engage critical stakeholders. It is recommended that RVS should automate its library services, employ a professional librarian, identify key stakeholders, join a professional association such as the Kenya Library Association – School Libraries’ Chapter, participate in library outreach programs and competitions, explore innovative ways of culturing the learners and community children.

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