Overview of the innovation
This project trained teachers through workshops, and also trained four academic staff at the College of Education, University of Rwanda to teach a future B.Ed. programme in teacher-librarianship at the College of Education (CoE). The objectives were to promote a reading culture and information literacy in all Rwanda’s schools by having teacher-librarians supporting the development of strong school libraries and the use of information resources in the classroom. This will not only increase literacy and reading for pleasure, but will also enable teachers to use a wider range of resources in class using learner-centred approaches to teaching.

The project was implemented in Nyagatare, Karongi, Rwamagana, Nyamagabe, Rubavu, and Gisagara Districts. The project trained 90 Teacher Training College (TTC) tutors and 405 school teachers benefitted from the innovation in 21 schools.

Total budget for this innovation was GBP 261,206.

Grant Recipient:
Information Training and Outreach Centre of Africa (ITOCA) in partnership with the University of Rwanda's College of Education and Syracuse University's School of Information Studies.

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What makes it innovative?
The innovative element of the project is the introduction to Rwandan schools of the concept of teacher-librarians trained to help learners acquire the habit of reading, help learners and teachers find and use information well, and manage school information resources. School libraries and individual teachers responsible for and trained in librarianship are rare in Rwandan schools. This new role is linked to an anticipated change in teaching and learning practices in which students will become more independent learners who are able to use information resources effectively and who develop the habit of reading.

Relevance to education priorities:
Main Theme: Effective teaching and learning
Rwanda’s Vision 2020 provides the aim of becoming a ‘knowledge society’ and trained teacher-librarians support this by creating an environment of intellectual curiosity and reading from the earliest levels of schooling.

Reading to improve literacy skills has also been promoted through a number of recent Government initiatives such as ‘Rwanda Reads’ and ‘All Children Reading’.

Project learning (activity/output to outcomes level)
- Teachers at TTCs as well as primary schools appreciated the teacher-librarian training and the project found that trained teachers put into practice many of the ideas from the ITOCA workshops, such as making books available by taking them out of boxes and arranging them on shelves, making time for children to read, and creating lesson plans using information resources.
- The project is dependent on NGO trainers and trainers trained by the NGO and the long-term effectiveness of this training approach is questionable. Follow-up with teacher-librarians in school to support the application of skills acquired is important.
- Training on the use of information resources cannot lead to the application of acquired skills in the many schools that do not possess such resources.
Project outcomes and reflection on monitoring and evaluation

The project undertook a descriptive evaluation with a baseline and end-line investigating, at the school level, the amount of student and teacher reading for pleasure, the information literacy of students and teachers. In addition, there is a descriptive report on the creation and success of creating a programme to train future teacher librarians. Quantitative measures were used for the amount of reading for pleasure (e.g. class time for reading, and reading during free time). Surveys and focus group discussions were used for the school-level data, along with some observations of the number and condition of books and the use of books in the classroom.

Few new school libraries were set up as a result of the initiative but separate government initiative has been providing more books to schools, especially textbooks. Other projects were focused on teaching teachers how to use textbooks in the classroom. This project sought to encourage teachers to allow children access to storybooks for pleasure reading, but the small number of storybooks available often made this difficult to measure and the evidence for the increasing use of books was inconclusive. However, many more teachers were allowing students time to read story books or read for pleasure in the classroom and there were a range of activities teachers employed to encourage reading (e.g. a reading competition). Information literacy was gauged by such things as teachers using research assignments and 65% of teachers did, though the increase from the baseline is unclear.

The use of information resources by teachers was problematic as there were still so few available, though some teachers were personally using the internet. But teachers were involving students in using conventional sources of information (e.g. dictionaries and atlases).

All four CoE staff enrolled in the USA-based library training completed the post-graduate certificate programme. A Rwandan library training programme for teachers has been designed and awaits university validation, and the four CoE staff will be able to teach this programme.

The report is transparent about the difficulties in collecting data (e.g. asking questions about reading at baseline, that teachers may not fully understand prior to training), and in the sampling (which was not representative or random). Much of the data presented does not directly address the outcomes specified and it is difficult to discern the overall impact of the project.
Conditions for success
The most important conditions for success are at the school level, related to the enabling factors that ensure the training provided to be applied. This refers to the availability and supply of supplementary materials and other information resources to be used in the classroom. Skills development without the materials that enable the application of the skills is problematic. The fact that the availability of libraries and reading materials is an important GoR priority as part of the implementation of the new curriculum provides opportunities in this regard. A related factor is the need for teacher and head teacher support that is continuous and based at the school, which will allow new practices to be applied in the classroom.

Other conditions for success are related to the desired formalisation of the teacher-librarian position within the system by REB and the final approval of the B.Ed. Librarianship programme at the College of Education (CoE).

Scale up and sustainability considerations
ITOCA presented clear short-term, medium-term and long-term plans for scale-up and sustainability.

In the short-term, it would like to continue offering workshops at the TTCs, i.e. offering the workshop at the nine TTCs that were not part of the pilot, and then repeat them at the original seven. The training is meant to complement training from REB in relation to curriculum implementation and thought has been given to seeking coordination with in-service teacher training activities of other NGOs. Training will only reach 16 teachers per year and another 16 Tutors at the TTCs. As mentioned above, there is an issue in relation to providing training without any associated in-school support.

In the medium-term, ITOCA considers developing an in-service teacher training, to train more teachers in the skills of teacher-librarianship at the Certificate level. Having a staff member who knows how to support the use of information resources and reading for pleasure in schools is expected to promote these activities, especially in a context where an increasing number of resources are supplied to schools by the government. These trainings can be delivered by the new in-service training centre at the CoE and the Principal supports this idea, though the in-service teacher training role for the CoE is not yet developed. However, at the moment, this seems just an idea from ITOCA to improve on the current situation until the first students complete the B.ED programme (the long-term option) in 2020. Concrete planning does not seem to have taken place yet. Questions remain about the appetite of the CoE to pursue this medium term option. The anticipated reach will be 20 teachers per year.

In the long term, ITOCA focuses on making the Bachelor of Education in Library and Information Science (B.Ed. LIS) sustainable. The B.Ed. LIS is designed to train teachers who can be teacher-librarians in secondary schools, with the possibility in future of this type of training being offered at the TTCs for primary school teachers. It is anticipated, therefore, that it will become possible to have a teacher-librarian in every school in Rwanda. The anticipated reach is 100 teachers per year, with the first cohort leaving the programme in 2020. A programme proposal for B.Ed. LIS is in the process of validation by the Higher Education Council and a curriculum for the B.Ed. LIS
The Minister of Education has given his support to this project, and a smooth implementation process is anticipated. The introduction of the B.Ed. LIS programme logically follows from the training of 4 CoE staff at Syracuse University during the pilot and is a progression into the specific area of pre-service teacher training at the CoE. This is quite different from the model piloted during IIE that focused on short-term in-service teacher training of teachers in primary schools as well as TTC tutors. The pilot results are not relevant for this pre-service scale-up option, so the impact of the B.Ed. programme will need to be evaluated during implementation.

There are significant risk factors with the long-term option. A sufficiently large cadre of qualified lecturers is required at the CoE. Through the pilot programme four lecturers have been trained to teach the new developed courses. Additional people will need to be trained at the appropriate level, through a distance learning approach and for a relatively long duration. This requires strong commitment from the trainees as well as funding.

Even if the B.Ed. programme can work and be sustained, there still remains an issue of sustaining other aspects of the model that will have to work together in order to ensure real impact on learners in schools in Rwanda. These factors include: [i] establishment of school libraries, [ii] the establishment of teacher-librarian positions in schools (REB decision), [iii] continuous professional support to teacher-librarians in the future and [iv] ensuring the use of information resources through the new curriculum.

**Cost Considerations**
For the short term scenario, ITOCA proposes to expand its pilot intervention and conduct workshops at all TTCs. Detailed costing has been provided amounting to GBP 7.10 per child, which is rather expensive for a mere continuation of the pilot experience. Costs can be reduced somewhat if the trainings are combined with other trainings conducted by other Grant Recipients, but no further details are provided for this alternative scenario.

For the medium term, the project proposes to offer a year-long certificate programme with training to be jointly provided by ITOCA and the (still to be established) national in-service teacher training centre of the CoE. With 30 teacher participants in the first year this will be achieved at the cost GBP 1.73 per child.

The long-term plan focuses on establishing the B.Ed. LIS and making it sustainable. ITOCA proposed 3 detailed options for this scenario that differ in terms of the institutions that deliver the programme and modes of course delivery for future lecturers. Across these options, costs per child vary between GBP 0.62 and GBP 1.78. The assumption is that the B.Ed. LIS programme itself will be paid from CoE resources.

**Immediate Next Steps**
- CoE to establish the B.Ed. LIS programme, register students and start delivery
- ITOCA and the CoE to identify funding for additional CoE staff to be enrolled in a Master’s Degree programme at a foreign university, in order to become future lecturers.
- ITOCA and CoE to jointly explore the opportunities for a Certificate programme (medium term plan) and CoE to decide whether this is an initiative worth developing, with funding coming from CoE. The actual success of this scenario will depend strongly on the future role of CoE in in-service teacher training.
- If external funding is available, ITOCA could undertake training all remaining TTCs (the short-term plan), but noting that an additional school-based continuous support component will need to be included in the package. There are doubts about the value for money of this option.
- ITOCA to continue the advocacy work with REB and the CoE on [i] the importance of establishment of school libraries, [ii] the establishment of teacher-librarian positions in schools, [iii] continuous professional support to teacher-librarians in the future and [iv] making sure that use of information resources is encouraged through the implementation of the new curriculum.