Publications about the Children's Centre and its programs

Dike, V. W., Onyebuchi, G. U. & Babarinde, E. T. (2015). Creating literacy learning spaces through group reading strategies: The Children's Centre Library vacation experience.
Literacy, while still essential for both personal and national development, has evolved far beyond the ability to read and write print; the concept is now applied to varied media in such forms as visual literacy, aural literacy, computer literacy and information literacy. It is best developed through conducive and nurturant learning spaces in libraries, schools, and communities, spaces supporting a wide variety of activities, including numerous group reading strategies. This paper identifies the Children's Centre Library of the University of Nigeria as such a literacy learning space. It describes the use of learning spaces for literacy development during the 2013 and 2015 vacation programs by detailing the use of eight group reading strategies: sustained silent reading, story hours, play with toys and games, book clubs, competitions in spelling and quizzes, art activities, comic book writing, and book making. The paper concludes that the Children's Centre Library vacation experience provides an example of literacy learning spaces in action.

Osadebe, N.E., Babarinde, E., Dike, V.W., and Emejulu, O. (2014). Contriving favorable literacy learning spaces & opportunities for children and young adults on long vacation: The 2013 Children's Centre experience. *Literacy and Reading in Nigeria:* Journal of the Reading Association of Nigeria (RAN), 15(2), 147-153.
In order to promote the literacy of children in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and its environs, the Children's Centre Library of the university coordinates a yearly program that provides a literacy learning space offering recreational and educational opportunities and develops literacy in all its forms. This year's program operated within August-September2013, with 214 children ages 3 to 18 divided into four ages groups: nursery-kindergarten, primary 1-3, primary 4-6, and secondary. Prominent among the activities were story hour, use of big books, making pocket books, comic book writing, drama, dance, cookery, writing biographies, and computer training. The program revealed that such activities help in determining the interest of each child and developing the intellect of children. Through continuation of activities like these, children will develop their cognitive reasoning and reading habits. It is recommended that extracurricular activities that can promote literacy skills should be promoted over and above lessons during vacation.

Dike, V.W., Eke, H.N., & Babarinde, E.T. (2013). Social media and reading among secondary school students in Enugu State, Nigeria. *Mousaion: South African Journal of Information Studies* 31(1), 60-81. The extensive use of social media by young people in many countries has raised concerns among adults, who are apprehensive about its effect on reading habits as well as literacy and communication skills. To what extent, however, does this situation apply to a developing country like Nigeria? This paper set out to explore this question by looking at patterns of social media use among secondary school students in Enugu State. Adopting a descriptive survey design, the study examined the use of social media by students in six secondary schools in Enugu and Nsukka, the two urban centers in the state. Questionnaire and focus group discussion were employed to collect the data. Findings were that access to and use of social media was limited, more so for junior than for senior secondary students. The young people used the media primarily for social and information-seeking purposes, and less for entertainment. Major benefits of social media use related to developing new skills, gaining access to information, and extending social contacts, while major dangers were perceived to be addiction, cyber bullying, and loss of study time. Students had positive attitudes toward reading as compared to social media; at the same time they were concerned that social media use could have negative effects on reading and suggested possible approaches. The researchers recommended that educators and librarians take advantage of Nigerian young people's seriousness of purpose and interest in both informational and social use of the media to utilize the media for broad educational purposes.

Osadebe, N. E. (2013). Football: An innovative way to attract teenagers to the library. Journal of Library Innovation 4(1), 10-20. Attracting teenagers to libraries has always been a challenge. To do this, the Children's Centre Library of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka combined a book club with a football club and made active library membership a prerequisite for joining.

Dike, V. W. & Ngwuchukwu, M. N. (2012). The role of prison libraries in promoting literacy for reformation, rehabilitation, and restoration of inmatess in two Nigerian prisons. In Cross-disciplinary perspectives in literacy and langue studies, 1: essays in honour of Chukwuemeka Eze Onukaogu, edited by O. Emejulu & I. Isiugo-Abanihe (p. 71-89). Kampala: International Development in Africa Committee, International Reading Association.

Dike, V. W., Ngwuchukwu, M. N. & Onyebuchi, G. U. (2011). Developing information literacy through primary school libraries in Nigeria. In *Global Perspectives on School Libraries: Projects and Practices,*

edited by L. Marquardt & D. Oberg (p. 108-117). IFLA publication 148.
Berlin: De Gruyter Saur. This project evolved in response to the need for
Nigerian children to develop information literacy that would equip them for
lifelong learning in a situation where resourses are few and the learning
environment uncongenial. Set in public primary schools in the town of
Nsukka and surrounding rural communities, the project set out to develop
functional primary school libraries providing the requisite learning resources
and opportunities for information literacy; teach information skills through
project work using community and library resources; conduct workshops to
equip teacher-librarians with skills in the organization and use of libraries
and teachers with capabilities for using library resources in teaching and
learning; and develop curriculum modules for library periods integrating
information and library use skills with curricular content. The chapter
describes the three phases of the project, the strategies adopted for
developing information literacy and the lessons learned.

**Dike, V. W., Amucheazi, O. N. and Ajogwu, M. N. (2007). Developing
literacy and lifelong learning through project work in Nigerian
primary schools.** *Literacy and Reading in Nigeria*, 11(1), 18-25.
How can Nigerian primary school children develop literacy for lifelong
learning? What resources might be exploited and what learning opportunities
organized for the acquisition of reading and learning skills? This paper
assesses several strategies employed for developing literacy among primary
school children in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, using a
questionnaire administered to teachers as the primary instrument. The first
is use of project work, whereby pupils gain information from local resources
such as people, markets, animal and plant life, through observation and
interview. Others involve efforts to build up school libraries as a way of
making more reading materials and information sources available to pupils
and the use of library activities such as drama, quiz and debate.

Dike, V. W. & Amucheazi, O. N. (2003). **Information literacy
education in Nigeria: Breaking down barriers through local
resources.**" IASL reports, 2003: School libraries breaking down barriers.
Selected papers from the 32nd conference of the International Association of
School Librarianship, Durban, South Africa, July 7-10, 2003, 196-205. IASL.
This paper explores the prospects of information literacy education in
Nigerian primary schools. It is argued that while information literacy is
essential for attaining the objectives of Nigerian education, a number of
barriers stand in the way. These include the learning environment, lack of
resources, language and literacy problems, and teacher orientation and
teaching practice. The information literacy project described in this paper,
based in seven public primary schools in the Nsukka area, is attempting to

break down the barriers through innovative use of available local resources, such as people in the community and features of the natural environment.

Dike, V. W. (2002). A prison library service in Nigeria. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science in Africa*, 2(1), 26-37. IFLA Africa Section. Prisoners, like other persons, need library services to exercise their fundamental human right to information. Libraries can play an even greater role in the lives of prisoners, due to their disadvantaged status. Library services are essential to the modern correctional objectives of reformation and rehabilitation. Yet, prison libraries are yet to be developed in many parts of the world. This paper places prison libraries in an international context while examining one prison library service in Nigeria. It analyzes the role and use of the Nsukka Prison Library over a two-year period, finding that it serves broad personal, educational and recreational purposes. The quality of personnel was identified as a key factor in creating effective library services. The paper recommends that the Nigerian Prisons Service embark upon systematic library development in all prisons, that library services be developed in coordination with educational and other prisoner welfare services, and that professional associations, public libraries and other agencies extend their supportive role.

Dike, V. W. (2002). Portable libraries as vehicles of literacy development: A library service to pupils and prisoners at Nsukka, Nigeria. In Proceedings of the 2nd Pan African Conference on reading for all, October 2001, Abuja, Nigeria. International Reading Association. This paper describes the Children's Centre portable libraries projects to a primary school and the prison, analyzing patterns of use and borrowing and the observed effects of the portable libraries on voluntary reading. Problems encountered revolve around personnel, time, materials, accommodation and integration of the library with the institutional programme. The paper recommends development of networks within government agencies, such as public libraries and state primary education boards, portable libraries as a stimulus to full library development, and provisions for personnel and training.

Kalu, W. J. (1997). Challenges of childhood education: Sub-Saharan African experience. A paper presented at the 2nd World Congress on Family Law and the Rights of Children and Youth, Education that is Culture Specific and Sustaining, San Francisco, California, June 2-7. The paper examines the broad features of major experiences that are shaping childhood education in sub-Saharan Africa. The attacks on traditions and economics of countries continue to change the configuration of educational plans and the attempts at cultural relevance and sustenance.
Children in sub-Saharan Africa tend to suffer educational upheavals and

frustrations more than alienation. Communal attempts at intervention within and outside the continent should be encouraged as an interim measure. The Children's Centre experience illustrates such efforts.

Dike, V. W. & Amucheazi, O. N. (1997). Information for all: Resource generation and information repackaging in Nigerian schools. In Information rich but knowledge poor? Emerging issues for schools and libraries worldwide, ed. by Lynne Lighthall & Ken Haycock, 245-250. IASL. Is a developing country like Nigeria information rich or information poor? The first impression is of scarcity, but closer examination reveals unexplored riches. There is a wealth of information in the oral tradition, but it is not found in schools and libraries. There is information in libraries, but language and reading level make it inaccessible to schoolchildren. What role might libraries play in resolving the information dilemma in Nigerian primary schools? This paper explores the use of resource generation from oral tradition and information repackaging from oral and written sources in creating an information and knowledge rich environment for all children.

Dike, V. W. (1996). Expanding the educational horizons of Nigerian schoolchildren. In Proceedings of the 25th annual conference of the IASL held in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 29-August 4, 1996. The paper begins by introducing the Children's Centre Library and the Nigerian educational system. It then discusses ways of expanding educational horizons through voluntary reading, giving examples of a project encouraging reading among secondary school students, a reading club, and a story hour series introducing countries around the world. Efforts to expand resources for teaching and learning in disadvantaged primary schools identified literacy and personnel as key factors and therefore focused on in-service training for teachers and development of appropriate reading materials.

Dike, V. W. (1995). Literacy without libraries: Promoting literacy among schoolchildren in Nigeria. In Literacy: Traditional, cultural, technological. Selected papers from the 23rd annual conference of the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., July 17-22, 1994, 33-41. IASL. How does one help children develop literacy where they have limited access to books and libraries? The paper examines this question in the context of the reading promotion outreach of the Children's Centre Library to primary schools in Nsukka, Nigeria. It begins by outlining the obstacles to literacy in Nigeria, which include socio-cultural factors, the second language problem, the nature of the educational system, and the lack of access to books and other resources for reading. Based on several small projects, observations are made concerning the children's access to books, cultural resources, and audiovisual media and on their reading level and response to books. The

paper recommends providing books by developing school libraries and local book production; changing education by expanding the curriculum, making education more learner-centered, and resolving the language problem; and developing programmes of literary mediation through story hours and reading clubs.

Kalu, W. J. (1983). Developing a concept for childhood survival in modern Nigeria. *School Psychology International 3, 161-168.*
Numerous problems face childhood in contemporary Nigeria. This paper discusses the main features of the problems as they affect the two major institutions for socialization, the family and the schools. The needs of the modern Nigerian child, especially for his future survival, are highlighted. A description is given of the Children's Centre project which is now in operation in one of the Nigerian University Campuses. It serves as an interpretation of a new positive concept of childhood survival necessary to meet the challenges posed on such a level in a developing country.