

The contribution of the African Storybook initiative to content development for multilingual literacy development in Africa

PALFA 2017, Abuja



Presenters

- Dorcas Wepukhulu (Partner Development Coordinator for the African Storybook initiative)
- Dr John Ng'asike (Mount Kenya University, Thika)
- Dr Cornelius Gulere (Uganda Christian University)
- Tessa Welch (African Storybook Project Leader)

African Storybook

- An initiative of Saide (a South African NGO involved in open education projects across sub-Saharan Africa).
- Addressing the question:
“How can children learn to read without books?
It’s like trying to learn soccer without a ball.”
- Funded by Comic Relief since 2013, but now diversifying its funding strategy – Comic Relief 1/5th; other funders/projects 4/5ths.

ASb publishing model

Provides **digital open access to children's picture storybooks,**
with creation and translation tools for users
to create and publish their own storybooks.



A publishing solution



ASb storybooks are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY 4.0) licence.

You are free to download, copy, translate or adapt this story and use the illustrations as long as you attribute or credit the original author/s and illustrator/s.



Search for storybooks

112

LANGUAGES

828

STORYBOOKS

3702

TRANSLATIONS



Open access to picture storybooks in the languages of Africa.
For children's literacy, enjoyment and imagination.

New stories

Storybooks approved by ASb 



ASb's main achievement 2013 to 2017

An African initiative by African people:
almost all storybooks written by the African communities
that use the storybooks.



Story development workshops with educators and partner organizations where storybooks with local content are produced





Rwanda



Ghana

Expansion into new countries



Ethiopia



Zambia



IciBemba

Bakafundisha Bandi

Eunice Mukonde-Mulenga
Jesse Pietersen



Ethiopia



Amharic

በሬ እና አህያ
Melese Getahun
Wolde
Salim Kasamba



Nigeria



Hausa (Nigeria)

Birai A Lokacin Fari

Shamsuddeen
Abdulkadir Dallaje
Salim Kasamba



Ghana



Mampruli

Dɔwa'Ali Pam
Midzira Charles and
Yakubu John
Catherine Groenewald



Hausa (Nigeria) >

○ APPROVED

TITLE ▼

DATE

READING LEVEL

🔍 Search for storybooks

'yar Da Ake Kauna
Muhammad Umar

Tukunyar da Ntaba ta fi kauna ta fashe, kuma ta damu, dan haka ta ruga cikin daji.

1 >

'yar Da Ake Kauna
Muhammad Umar

Natabo's favourite pot is broken, and she is so upset that she runs away to the forest. (Also available at Level 3).

1 >

Ah! Kwallon Kafa
Safiya Datti Muhammad

Wani yaro karami kakarsa ta aike shi ya sayo mata 'yan kayayyaki a kanti. Sai ya tafi da babban abokinsa, sai suka buge da wasan kwallon kafa da yara. Shin zai kawo aike da aka yi masa?

2 >

Anansi Malalaci
Tony Lelliott

Dalilin da ya sa Gizo-gizo

1 >

46 books of 4513 books match the criteria you selected.

CLOSE

Methods of delivery

Digital projection (offline or online)

OR Print





African Storybook Reader (Beta)

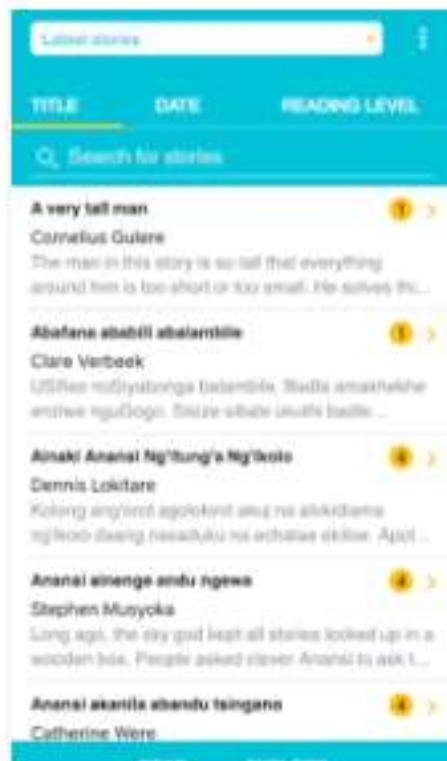
Saide Education Education

★★★★★ 15



- 1 Hooray! You're a beta tester for this app.
- 1 This app is compatible with all of your devices.

Installed



Lastly, it was Ajoh's turn. She was scared. She stepped forward and started singing. But her singing sounded terrible and the words were wrong.

Unyalego shouted, "Can't you sing properly like the others?"

The snake knew that Ajoh took his golden teeth.



Die
me
wa

Ma
ho
din
pal

Plan: website available on devices that do not require internet access to create or translate

RACHEL, the Remote Area Community Hotspot for Education and Learning

- 20-50 simultaneous users
- 400GB of content + easy 100GB "add your own" content portal



[HOME](#)

[ABOUT](#) ▾

[SOLUTIONS](#) ▾

[PRODUCT](#)

[BLOG](#)

[CONTACT](#)

Products

Cube and PortableCloud™

The PortableCloud platform and Cube micro-servers allow users to access curated files, web-content and web-apps over WiFi in any device with a browser, at blazing speeds, regardless of Internet connectivity.

Large scale use

ASb storybooks preloaded on devices

Eg Kenya:



The KICD has quality assured 135 titles in three languages for the Digital Literacy Programme and the Kenya Education Cloud

Republished by others

Worldreader

- is using 51 ASb titles on mobile devices as well as in their school and library projects in SSA;
- pushed 42,968 individual ASb storybooks to their projects with more than 12,000 going to Nigeria;
- their most-read title in 2016 was an ASb storybook!



Very low print costs for printing at scale

- In SA's KwaZulu-Natal in 2015, the Depart. of Ed printed 5,000 full-colour A4-size 64-page storybook anthologies for USD 1.5 per copy;
- And 166,000 b/w A5 learner books for only USD 0.25 each;
- A new USAID-funded project in SA's North West Province will print and distribute 581,000 full-colour storybooks over two years from 2017, at a unit cost of USD 0.33 including packaging, distribution and storage.

ASb on the Global Digital Library

- The Global Digital Library aims to launch in early 2018 and they are wanting to use ASb Storyweaver and Benetech as their core collection;
- Once our ASb books are in ePub they can be fed to many apps and platforms without our intervention;
- The main languages in which books will be available this way are Kiswahili, Hausa and Amharic.

Mother tongue storybooks for literacy improvement and curriculum innovation:

A research and development study in six primary schools in Turkana Pastoralist Communities

Dr John Ng'asike

Mismatch between the national curricula and pastoralist lifestyles

- Children participate in family socio-economic activities
- Livestock is the foundation of the herders literacy
- Instruction in English denies the herders opportunity to develop literacy from family environment



Cultural activities are in sharp contrast with school life



Six schools selected for the study

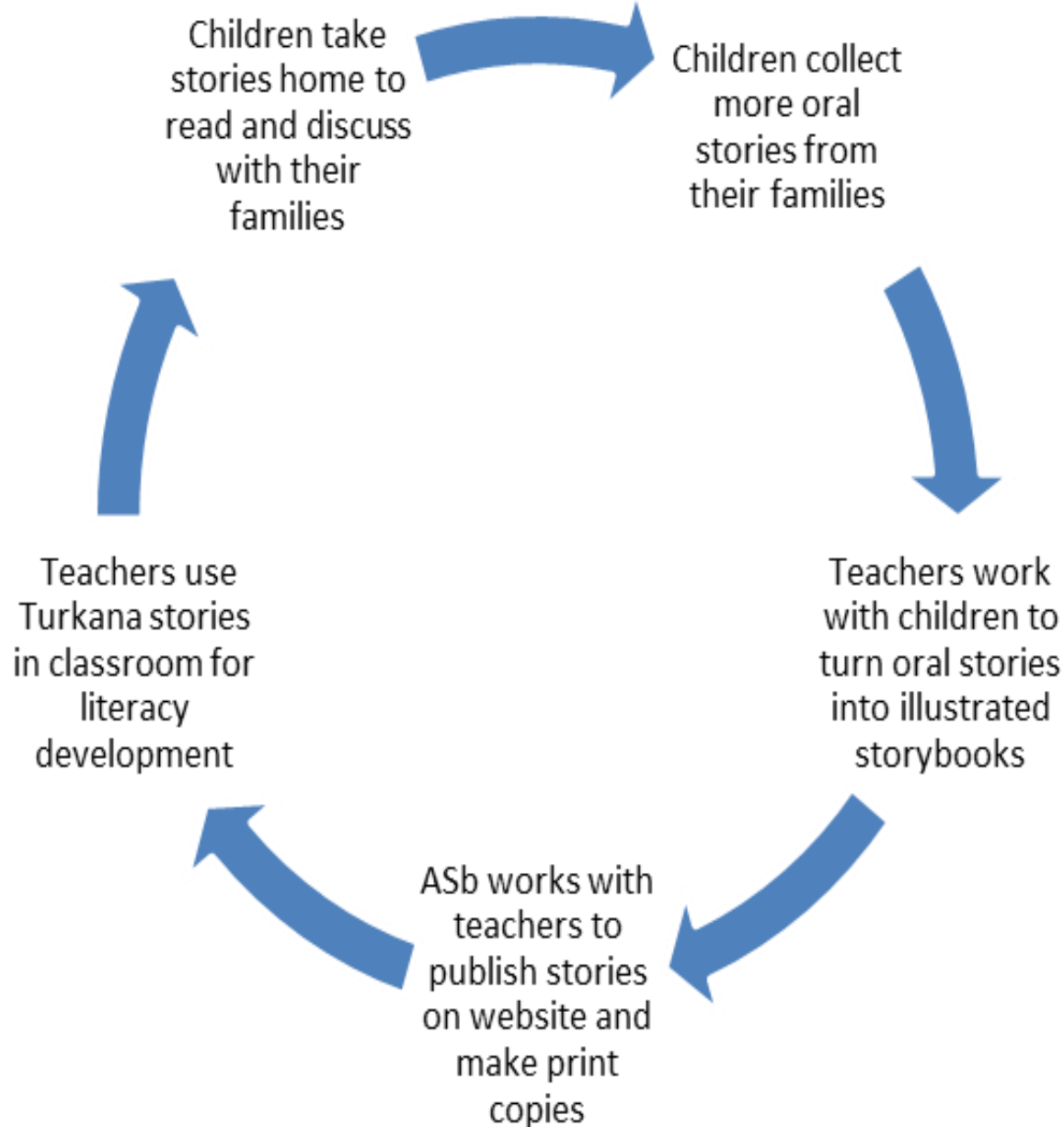
- Schools from rural pastoralist areas as a pilot
- The children are from the pastoralist families living around the schools exposed only to mother tongue
- There is resistance to mother tongue instruction in schools as observed from my first study (Ng'asike, 2010)
- We also wanted to create literacy awareness in rural pastoralist families.

Characteristics of the schools

- Majority of the schools have basic physical infrastructure
- Enrolment is a challenge
- In small schools one or two teachers are present
- Learning materials are from Nairobi
- Food is critical as a result of poverty
- Text books are scripted to meet examination needs
- No reading materials beyond the textbooks
- Supervision of curriculum is a major challenge



The Concept of Intervention



Sources of stories: teachers, children, elders and parents



Stories collected are refined in workshops to ensure:

- They are written in the template provided by ASb
- Quality of text
- To agree on matters of Turkana orthography



Stories published/nearly published

Title	Language
The jealous co-wife	Ngaturkana/English
Hunter and giraffe	Ngaturkana/English
An honest girl	Ngaturkana/English
Ostrich and lioness	Ngaturkana/English
A lazy woman	Ngaturkana/English
A woman who does not save for the future	Ngaturkana/English
The contest between the elephant and the spirit	Ngaturkana/English
Child as a peacemaker	Ngaturkana/English
Greedy Hyena	Ngaturkana/English
Danger of abandoning a mother	Ngaturkana/English

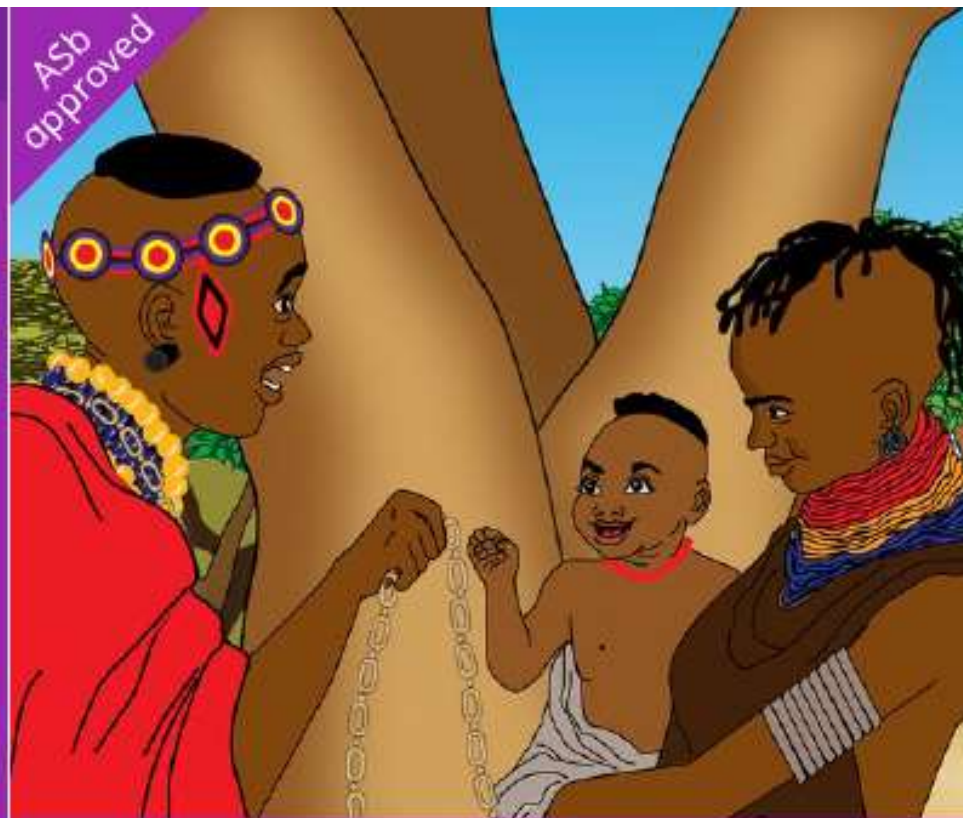
Nearly all illustrated by local Turkana illustrator

You are free to download, copy, translate or adapt this story and use the illustrations as long as you attribute in the following way:

Child As a Peacemaker

Author - John Nga'sike
Translation - John Nga'sike
Illustration - Jacob Kono
Language - English
Level - First sentences

© African Storybook Initiative 2015
Creative Commons: Attribution 4.0
Source www.africanstorybook.org



Child As a Peacemaker

John Nga'sike

Jacob Kono

English



Follow-up and use of stories

- Schools are provided with published story books for children to read in class
- Through follow-up, children report that teachers keep the books away from them



Results

- Girls are quick to volunteer to read a story and to tell a story
- Children are more excited and motivated
- Children's self esteem and confidence rise as they develop interest in reading and telling a story
- Attendance improves and academic grades improve as well
- It is an awakening to parents as they have never believed they can contribute to school learning

Resistance

- Teachers' effort is very minimal
- Even though there are no extra reading materials beyond textbooks, teachers limit the use of storybooks
- The story books must be brought to them in schools, otherwise teachers do not make efforts to get them from the library set up at Lolupe Primary
- Children argue that they would rather be given the story books to read at home than to get them from the teachers

- Speaking mother tongue in school is perceived as promoting tribalism
- Teachers hold the view that using in mother tongue interferes with the learning of English and is not in curriculum
- Emphasis on the official curriculum on examination performance hinders any effort to introduce innovations in learning using local knowledge practices
- Teachers are afraid to teach mother tongue as it might lead to disciplinary action
- English is associated with good education and language of examination success

Way forward

- Wider stakeholder engagement – especially with Turkana Professionals
- Continuing to seek support of the County Government to support printing of the story books

Developing, translating and quality assuring storybooks in local Ugandan Contexts

Dr Cornelius Gulere



Why is it important to get stories from people on the ground?

Why Community Library Involvement?

- Instructive and delightful
- Long lasting impact on the reader
- Extension of the community voice
- Seal of identity and esteem when learning from within
- Sense of accomplishment
- Security of information
- Trustworthiness
- ASb interested in the values of the local story

Children painting their best in a reading camp at Mpolyabigere – Kidiki Library



Role of Community Libraries

- Uganda Community libraries have a unique role in fostering local language and literature development.
 - Communal spaces
 - Story telling
 - Bring together all gender and age groups
 - Widespread in basic communities
 - Endowed with literacy strategies
 - Focused on books

Stories worked on since 2013

- **6 Participating libraries**
 - **200+ Authors , 2 Transcriptors**
 - **12 Translators, 1 Local Editor**
- **282 stories developed**
- **225+ final edits 40 submitted to Asb**
- **12 so far published**
- **120 Translations & Adaptations worldwide**

Performing the stories

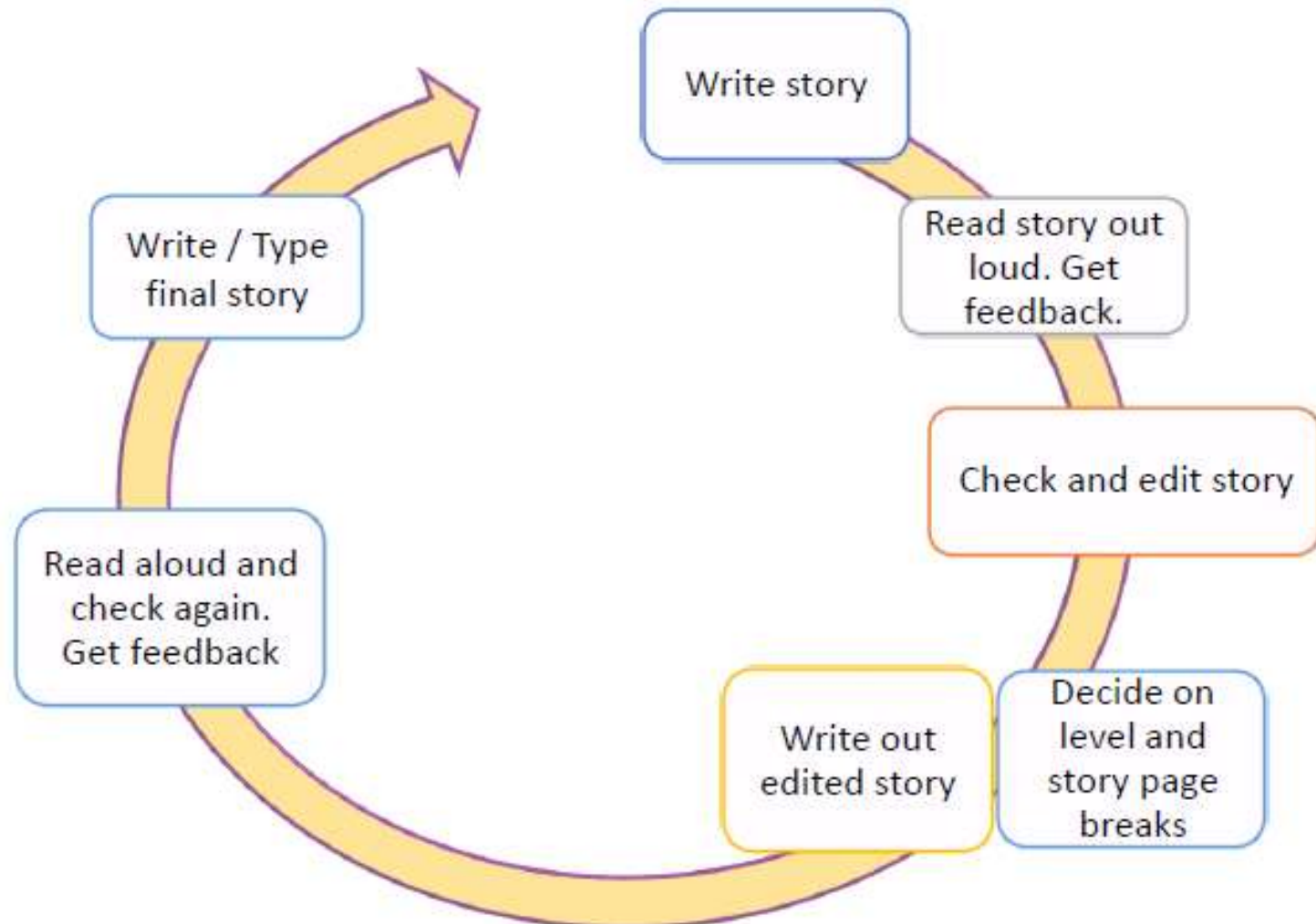


Reading to enjoy

- Children enjoy reading books of the people they know.
- Books about familiar objects and events.
- Such books can only be created at a community library.

What does it take to transform these stories into picture storybooks?

WRITING PROCESS AND STORYBOOK FORMAT



Writing, Translating and Editing



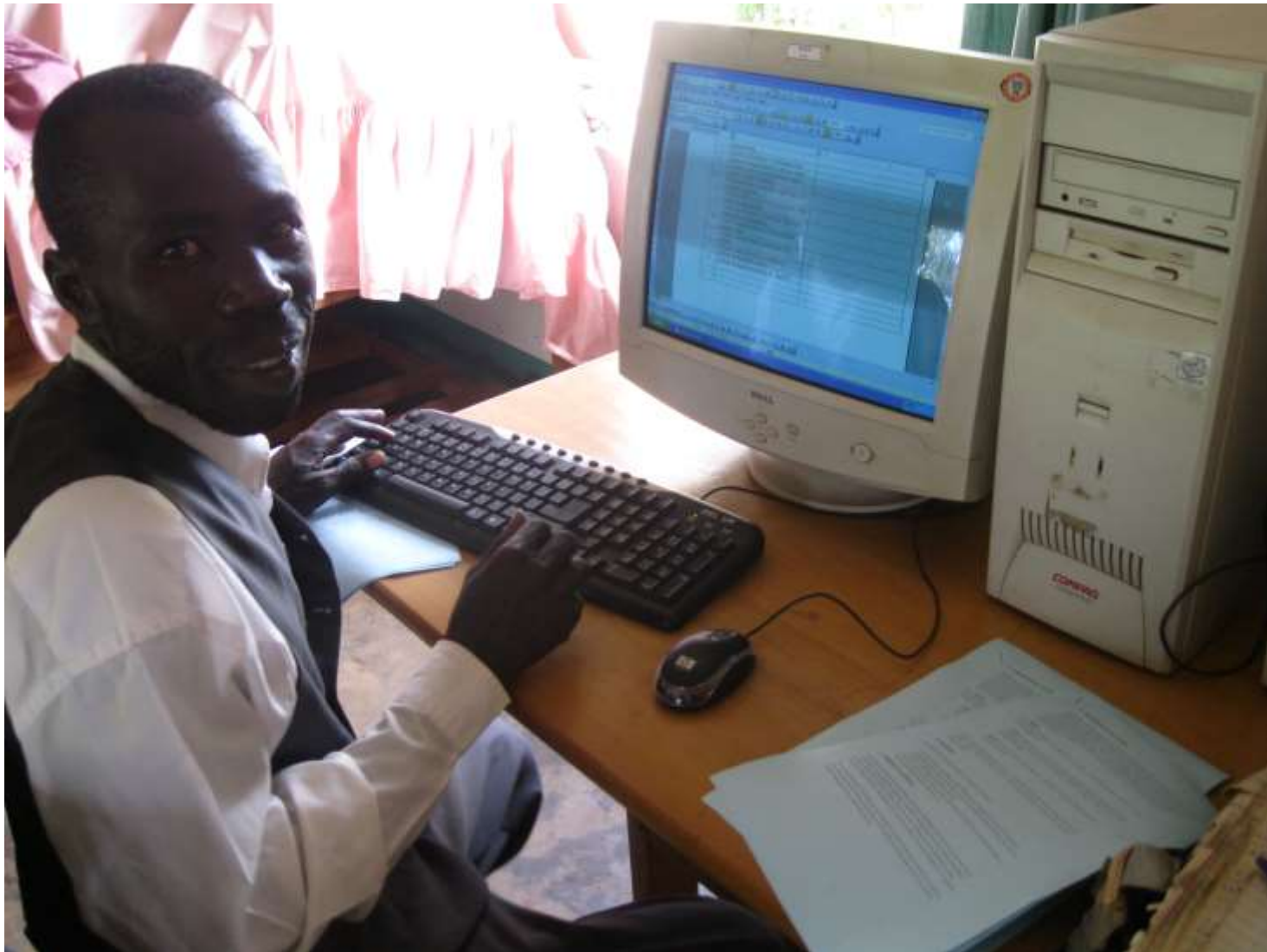
Complex Local Meanings

- Lwaki Yayeri Muzira? – Why is Yayeri a Hero?
 - Riddling in the stories embeds meanings in words. In this story, Lwaki could mean why and when
 - The Yayeri name is motional ya –ye-ri
 - Muzira could mean hero or nothing.
- And so the title suggests twofold meanings of why the Yayeri is a hero and when she is nothing.
- This is however lost in translation.

Achieving universal appeal

- Sensitivity to colour, word choice, gender, naming, titling, themes and contexts
- Aim to strike balance by producing at least one book from each of the participant/library
- Political colours and symbols avoided
- Local names and titles used.

Writing, Translating and Editing



Further Editing and Work with Illustrators

- Lisa in South Africa further edited the English versions and I in Uganda synchronized with Lusoga texts
- My role in engaging with her suggestions was to make sure that the message in the story is faithful to the original text.
- I reviewed all the recommendations Lisa made for illustration and sometimes we had to change colours, images and combinations to suit the local context.

Writing, Translating and Editing



Role of universities

- How students and staff at universities can help in the production of children's storybooks.
 - 11 BA Education and BA Languages students at Uganda Christian University were able to translate 200 books into 10 different languages in 100 days.
 - Done as part of their Creative Writing Course

Critical success factors

- computers and reliable internet
- basic training and institutional support
- Timetable creative writing as training course
- Support printing and marketing
- Sensitise on the values of L1 & children's Sb
- Invest in Staff & Students interest
- Build a bank of peer reviewers
- Put the books to use

Challenges

- Few computers and unreliable internet
- No time to read the help online notes
- Timetable offers very limited time
- Printing and marketing are quite expensive
- Many look at L1 children's Sb as unnecessary
- Some Staff, Students & Reviewers need pay
- Not many peer reviewers
- Putting the books to wide use

Tessa instructing UCU Staff and Students how to print on demand from Asb Platform



We invite you to participate!

- Contribute translations or new storybooks from your country on the website
- Invite us to your country to set up a network of users and contributors
- Tell us how you are using the storybooks – so that we can engage funders and governments
- Collaborate with us in funding proposals to facilitate and research story development and use in different contexts.