

CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY READING CAMP, HELD AT MIREMBE JUNIOR SCHOOL, MAKINDYE DIVISION, KAMPALA CITY. FROM 6-8, MAY, 2019

REPORT

Introduction

In its effort to contribute towards inculcating a reading culture among communities, starting from childhood, UCWIA organized a reading camp at Mirembe Junior School. Under this initiative pupils, aged 5 to 14 years, and from different schools were invited to gather at one school and participate in the event. At the end of the event some reading materials were donated to the host school and some of the schools in the surrounding area whose pupils had participated in the event.

Preparations

A survey was carried out in different divisions of Kampala, to establish a school which was able and willing to host the event. The schools targeted were those located in densely populated peri-urban areas. The host school had to be willing to host pupils residing in the area and studying in different schools.

The management of Mirembe Junior School received the idea with enthusiasm and offered their school. The Director of the school, Ms. Jolly Kamishani offered to participate in publicizing the event at the local level and to interest parents and fellow teachers in it. The school also offered some of their members of staff to work with the organisers to run the event - these included some teachers, children carers, cooks, askaris and the school nurse.

Opening Ceremony



The camp was officially opened by Mr. Jamada Bukenya, Chairman, Education Committee for Makindye Division. Mr Bukenya thanked the organizers for bringing this project to their area. He said that promotion of reading was one of the key goals of his committee. So this programme was very opportune and timely.

Ms. Mahoro Danakensi, Women Councillor for Bukasa, welcomed the project to her area. She said that such programmes help in engaging children and stopping them from loitering in the village during holidays.

The Director of the school, Mrs Jolly Kamishani, welcomed everybody to the school. She thanked the organisers of the programme, UCWIA, for thinking about Makindye division, and bringing the project to their school. She wished everybody a nice and eventful three days.

Mrs Evangeline Barongo, Chairperson of UCWIA, welcomed everybody to the event. She talked about the Uganda Children's Writers and Illustrators Association (UCWIA) what it is and what it does as well as IBBY role in Uganda and worldwide.

A key-note address on Reading as a Learning Activity was given by Ms. Ruth Mwayi, one of the UCWIA members.

Activities

Reading



Discussing the story



Making toys from banana fibers



Writing stories



Children participated in different activities such as;

- Reading
- Story writing
- Molding and craft / beads work.

They rotated so that all of them got the opportunity to try out at all the activities. The number of participants kept increasing day by day.

A set of terms of reference had been prepared to guide the teachers / facilitators who would supervise the children within the groups.

On the second day, some of the older children were enabled to visit the Uganda Wildlife Education Centre (the zoo) at Entebbe.

Children in the Zoo at Entebbe Education Centre.



Lunch at the Zoo



Listening to the Zoo guide



The children liked the visit and on return some of them got involved in molding some of the animals which they had seen at the zoo. They named it Mirembe Junior School Wild Life Centre, and those involved very ably acted as zoo guides as they explained about the animals exhibited to the parents and visitors that were able to come at the closing of the camp. Other children wrote stories about that visit to the zoo.

Children molding animals which they had seen at the zoo.



Closing Ceremony

The programme was closed after the third day. The closing ceremony was attended by, among others, two councilors: Ms. Mahoro Danakensi and Mr. Jamada Bukenya, and some parents. Mr James Mwanja, Inspector of Schools, KCCA officiated.

Two of the children presented a song, thanking the organisers of the event. The song also emphasized the importance of reading in education and as a life-long activity.

Children are singing at the closing day.



Mr. Jamada Bukenya reiterated the gratitude. He decried the current commercialisation of education and the irresponsibility of parents towards their children. He said he would endeavor to mobilise parents to appreciate the value of education and in particular the value of reading. For UCWIA, he asked them to share the knowledge and run similar programmes in other parts of the city. For the children, he urged them to share what they had learnt at this event with their parents and friends who had missed out. “You can even make money out of some of the things you have learnt here,” he told them.

Mrs. E.L. Barongo, Chairperson of UCWIA, thanked the children for coming, the teachers for their cooperation, and the parents for having released their children for the programme. “Reading is Key to Knowledge,” she said. As an incentive towards building reading collections for the schools, the organisers donated some books to Mirembe Junior School, the hosts for this year’s camp, and three other schools in the area whose pupils had participated in the camp. The books would be delivered at the respective schools by UCWIA members.

Mr. Mwanja said that he was happy to observe the activities carried out. It was a clear reflection of what had been done during the previous three days. He observed that the core of their work was reading and writing. – in Reading, one has to internalize what has been read and to write it. If one writes badly then the examiners would not waste their time on such work, they would just by-pass it. He called on teachers to make reading interesting by being more practical. Teaching and Learning has to be made more interesting. He urged the organisers to carry on with this programme and to spread it to other areas for the good of our children’s education.

Children who had excelled at the various activities were awarded prizes. Altogether 136 children participated in the camp aged between 5 and 14 years.

The Guest of Honor, at the closing ceremony



Recommendations

- Due to the enthusiasm shown by the participants – pupils, teachers and parents – the event could be made a regular activity and it could be spread to other areas so that more people benefit from the experience.
- Now that some teachers have been shown what could be done, they should be encouraged to spread the idea to their colleagues in this and in other schools, to carry forward with such programmes.
- Some of the scripts written by the children during the event could be collected, compiled, and prepared for publishing.
- Parents should encourage and support this kind of programme to be held every school holiday.

Conclusion

This was another learning experience for both the organisers and the recipients of the programme. There is always something new that one learns as one goes through different experiences.

UCWIA / IBBY is grateful to Mirembe Junior School which worked with us on this programme. They played a vital part in achieving the success that was realized. The teachers and the pupils / participants were a great team to work with. We also thank the parents in the Namuwongo area, who willingly sent their children to the event. UCWIA is grateful to IBBY for their support which enabled the carrying out of the programme.