



## Readers' Voices to ABD 33-1

### Books for Children by the Locals

Here at the University of the South Pacific (USP) "a dream come true" is being realised. The 12 member countries of USP can now enjoy books for children written and illustrated by the locals and published by the Institute of Education (IOE), USP. The series is called the Waka Series. APPREB have also funded two book production workshops held at the IOE/USP. The stories published have been widely distributed in this region. Children can now read and relate to things that are closer and dear to them and those that they encounter daily. This has been a long struggle also but we now are benefitting from the realisation of the dream, having children read and enjoy books of their cultures. The joy and privilege this gives, particularly to someone from a non-book background, is immense and fulfilling.

Some countries like the Solomons and Vanuatu have worked further with other organisations to develop their own stories for their children.

The experience in the Middle East with the youths writing their own feelings, comments, opinions and judgements on the realities in their part of the world is also something that is new in our part of the world. The *Crossing Borders* is an excellent innovation to the reconciliation process...To start the process with adolescents and youths is to start building a better world. Let us persevere with our dreams. They will be realised if we work diligently with respect, patience, understanding and tolerance.

(Sereima Lumelume, Fiji)

### Library Project for Refugee Camps in Iran

*Fourteen children's libraries in Iraqi and Afghan Refugee Camps in Iran were established between 1995 and 1998, with the co-operation of the Bureau of Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Children's Book Council of Iran (CBCI).*

The CBCI is a registered nongovernmental organization well known for conducting research on children's literature and the promotion of reading through volunteer work in Iran. CBCI was invited by UNHCR as the implementing partner to select/prepare the library collection, to provide a one-day training and to establish the libraries in each camp location.

After establishment of libraries, many recommendations addressed to the parties concerned were recorded in the reports. Some of the major ones are as follows:

1. Due to the lack of space in the camps, CBCI's original aim of establishing public libraries for children had turned into school library project with the great possibility of its being closed during the summer and other holidays. On the other hand there are many literate boys and girls who are no longer attending school who cannot use the library. Therefore it is very important that a special room be provided as a public library in the camps.
2. Considering the number of literates in the camps, their expressed interest, and the bimonthly reports received by some of the libraries, and other programs with educational or cultural aims carried out by UNHCR, provisions should be made

to extend the age limit of the library users and procure reading material suitable for the higher age groups. The library should also act as a resource centre for all other related activities.

3. Once a library is established it becomes a dynamic and ongoing project. It is important that books and other materials be provided on a standing basis for each established library. Fortunately UNHCR made such provisions for the first 5 libraries established in this project.
4. A library's effect on its community depends much on the way it is organized and reports are unanimous on the interest of the refugee volunteers in the libraries, but to keep this interest going and extending, it is recommended that some way of incentive/compensation be worked out. It is only in such a situation that follow-up activities can be carried out with success.
5. Regular contact between the professional group supporting the project—in this case the CBCI—and the camp authorities/refugee librarians is essential. Plans must be made for regular visits, preferably every 4 months, and the duration should be planned according to the distances, to permit more effective work with children and other groups at the camps after the establishments.

(Lili Hayeri Yazdi, Iran)

Write your comments in APPREB Bulletin Boards ([http://www2.accu.or.jp/03/03\\_01.html](http://www2.accu.or.jp/03/03_01.html)), or e-mail to [abd@accu.or.jp](mailto:abd@accu.or.jp), [appreb@accu.or.jp](mailto:appreb@accu.or.jp)

### Additional Comments from Respondents to "English in Education" Questionnaire summarized in back cover

#### Bangladesh

Recently there is a growing feeling among all levels of people about the necessity to learn English. In addition, academic institutions, private teaching centres and coaching centres are providing English language courses.

#### Fiji

Fijian is taught in Fijian schools, Hindi in Indian schools and Chinese in Chinese schools, but the main language of instruction is English.

#### India

In private schools English is taught as a language from primary classes or from pre-school. In the government schools science subjects are taught in English from the grade 4 onwards.

#### Indonesia

As a language of instruction, English is used only in the international schools and in some educational institutions having cooperation with foreign agencies. English as a foreign language in formal school is not adequate so that even after graduating from a university, having studied English for eleven years, students have not mastered the English language.

#### Iran

English is formally introduced to children in 7th grade (junior high school), but many schools offer English classes as an extra activity for children from primary schools. English is not used as a second language and the use of English as a language of instruction is restricted to a few number of universities.

#### Lao PDR

English and French are the two major foreign languages used parallelly in formal education.

#### Malaysia

Regarding English use for instruction in class, some teachers use it because the reference books are written in English. Some subjects (business study, management, law, etc.) are totally taught in English.

#### Mongolia

In secondary education, English is officially taught for 6 years from the 5th through 10th grade. However, private primary schools and some kindergartens offer English from early stages. This is because English has become quite popular among the public.

#### Nepal

The national education policy prescribes English as a compulsory subject from 5th grade in public schools. The private schools have introduced English from 2nd grade.

#### Pakistan

In pre-school and primary level about 20% of schools use English as the medium of instruction.

#### Rep. of Korea

English is getting more and more important with the so-called "globalization". Even though schoolchildren begin to learn English from the 3rd grade, most Korean children begin it as early as kindergarten.

#### Thailand

English is normally taught as a first foreign language and begins in primary school. There are a few educational institutes beginning to use English as a language of instruction at various levels.

#### Viet Nam

There are quite a few international schools and universities, so English is more common.