

PROJECT LEAP: BASELINE REPORT

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Executive Summary

Project LEAP, which stands for “**Libraries, e-Reading, Activities and Partnership**,” is a groundbreaking pilot program implemented by Worldreader in partnership with eight public and community libraries in Western Kenya, and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. LEAP is testing the use, function and adoption of e-readers in the pilot libraries in an effort to investigate the scalability of library e-reader programs across Kenya and sub-Saharan Africa. The ultimate goal of the program is increasing reading through libraries, and thereby improving literacy skills with attendant impacts on poverty, health, gender equality and social mobility.

In early 2014 Worldreader deployed 200 e-readers (each preloaded with 200 digital book titles) to the selected pilot libraries, for a total of 40,000 books distributed so far. LEAP project managers were trained on e-reader operation, project management, monitoring and evaluation and more, and community launch and training events were held in the pilot libraries. This report outlines the needs, characteristics and observed trends among project libraries as part of a baseline exercise, and will be used for comparison in forthcoming midterm and final reports. Key findings include:

Both library patrons and staff identified **diversity and size of library collections** and **the need for more technology programs** as key concerns prior to the commencement of the e-reader program.

Library users at all eight pilot sites tend to be young, with patrons under 25 years old being significantly more active users of the libraries than older adults. This holds true despite there being great diversity among the settings of the libraries themselves, and points to an important need to engage young people.

Social interaction and public programs that engage patrons were identified as vital program components for connecting with current patrons, and raising awareness about the library and e-reader program for non-patrons. Nearly half of all patron survey respondents reported attending some public programs at the libraries prior to the start of LEAP.

Based on these findings, Worldreader is working with project managers at each of the pilot libraries to develop policies, procedures and actions that will set each up for success, including authoring regulations around e-reader borrowing, conducting patron training, brainstorming ideas for public programs specifically utilizing the e-readers, and more.

Worldreader expects that, due to the availability of existing resources and previous experience working with technology-based interventions, urban LEAP libraries will experience more ease with the technical implementation of the project. However, because patrons of rural libraries are less likely to have access to other technology resources, the project team expects that LEAP will drive greater increases in patronage and patron diversity among rural and smaller libraries, due to high levels of excitement around the e-readers.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Table of Contents	5
Introduction	6
Methodology and Research Design	9
Library Selection	9
Trainings and Project Launches	10
Baseline Methodology	11
Key Insights	13
Library Location and Affiliation	13
Library Patronage	14
Library Collection	16
Library Staff	20
Library Activities	22
Technology Programs	23
Conclusions, Next Steps and Lessons Learned	25
Works Cited	27
Appendices	28

Introduction

“Freedom, Prosperity and the Development of society and individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information.”

UNESCO, *Public Library Manifesto*, 1949

Across continents and cultures, libraries provide open access to information to billions of people. On the role of libraries in the creation of literate environments, UNESCO states they are key to “finding, using and interpreting appropriate information that opens up opportunities for lifelong learning, literacy enhancement, informed citizenship, recreation, creative imagination, individual research, critical thinking, and ultimately, empowerment in an increasingly complex world.” Moreover, “they embrace the social responsibility to offer services that bridge social, political and economic barriers, and traditionally make a special effort to extend their services to marginalized people.”¹

Project LEAP, which stands for “**L**ibraries, **e**-Reading, **A**ctivities and **P**artnership,” is a groundbreaking pilot program implemented by Worldreader in partnership with eight public and community libraries in Western Kenya, and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The project aims to capitalize on the evolving role of libraries as centers of information, community and learning, increasing the availability of reading materials in Kenya’s public and community libraries through the provision of e-readers filled with hundreds of relevant books. LEAP is testing the use, function and adoption of e-readers in the pilot libraries in an effort to investigate the scalability of library e-reader programs across Kenya and sub-Saharan Africa. The ultimate goal of the program is increasing reading through libraries, and thereby improving literacy skills with attendant impacts on poverty, health, gender equality and social mobility.

In early 2014 Worldreader deployed 200 e-readers (each preloaded with 200 digital book titles) to the selected pilot libraries, for a total of 40,000 books distributed so far.

¹ Krolak, L (2005) for UNESCO, “The Role of Libraries in the creation of literate environments.” Accessed at: <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/literacy-and-reading/publications/role-of-libraries-in-creation-of-literate-environments.pdf>

LEAP project managers were trained on e-reader operation, project management, monitoring and evaluation and more, and community launch and training events were held in the pilot libraries. The project includes ongoing monitoring and research in order to understand the potential impact e-readers may have on library patronage, library infrastructure, and librarian habits, attitudes and practices, in addition to keys to operational success. This report outlines the needs, characteristics and observed trends among project libraries as part of a baseline exercise, and will be used for comparison in forthcoming midterm and final reports.

Project Need

The Library of Alexandria served as the ancient world's single greatest archive, thriving as a center of literature and information on the African continent for centuries. Yet today in much of Africa, there is significantly limited access to books and information. According to UNESCO, "Africa produces a mere 2% of the world's books, despite having 12% of the world's population. It is estimated that sub-Saharan Africa imports close to 70% of its books. The majority are university textbooks and vocational training books and cost an average of US\$25 per copy."² This causes many libraries to struggle to maintain relevant and current reading material in their physical collections.

Indeed, transportation, logistics, and financial constraints contribute to the lack of availability of paper books and other written materials on the African continent and in developing countries. Other common challenges faced by libraries in sub-Saharan Africa include: "poor infrastructure, low levels of digital resource access, lack of funding and the absence of professional development, and training to re-skill public librarians for the 21st century."³

The Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) Board was established by the Kenyan parliament in 1965, and "is empowered to develop public library services in Kenya to fill the vacuum that existed before and soon after independence regarding the provision of public library services."⁴ It has a network of 58 libraries and as of 2011-

² Makotsi, Ruth (2004), "Sharing Resources - how library networks can help reach education goals," cited in Krolak, L (2005).

³ African Public Libraries Summit, n.d., "Communique: African Public Libraries Summit: 'Informing Africa, Developing Africa.'" Accessed at: http://www.african-public-libraries-summit.org/ressources/APLS2012/div/Communique_Framework_African_Public_Libraries_Summit.pdf.

⁴ Kinya, Dr. Henry DS (2011), "Public Libraries in Kenya: Collection Development." Accessed at: http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol._1_No._9_Special_Issue_July_2011/31.pdf.

2012, had 7.6 million users with 8.9 million items borrowed in the same year.⁵ A less structured network of community libraries also exists in Kenya, and some of these receive programmatic support from larger KNLS libraries.

In its 2013- 2017 strategic plan, KNLS identified “obsolescence due to rapidly changing technologies,” “increased demand for automation and virtual access,” and “increasing need to build, preserve and provide digital content” as key concerns.⁶

Applications for Project LEAP corroborate the need for digital and technological advancements in Kenya’s libraries. The most frequent reason selected libraries applied for the program was the desire to build patrons’ technological skills, followed by increasing the variety of resources available at the library (see Table 1).

Table 1: Reasons for Applying for Project LEAP	
Reasons for Applying	Number of libraries responding
Building patrons' technological skills	6
Increasing variety of available resources at library	5
Driving literacy-related outcomes of patrons	3
Potential for cost-effectiveness	2
Attracting different age groups to library	2
Building a reading culture at the library	2
Potential for time savings	1
Increasing library's public profile	1
Total responses	15

*Responses from successful Project LEAP applications (eight libraries in total).

E-reader programs have the potential to effectively address both technological concerns and the need for more books and more diverse library collections. Through Worldreader’s programs e-readers have already been successfully used by over 13,000 children and teachers, and their families, in nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa. With e-readers, books are available at the click of a button, and more books are available each month as Worldreader works with both African and international publishers to digitize and upload relevant content. Moreover, Worldreader’s work to reduce the cost and complexity of using e-readers makes

⁵ Goete-Institut Kenya (2012), “The Library Landscape in Kenya. An Overview.” Accessed at: <http://www.goethe.de/ins/ke/nai/kul/mag/bib/bil/en9853827.htm>

⁶ KNLS (n.d.), “Strategic Plan 2013 – 2017.” Accessed at: <http://www.knls.ac.ke/about-us/strategic-plan>

them a compelling, cost-effective and efficient alternative to distributing paper-based books in sub-Saharan Africa.

Methodology and Research Design

Library Selection

Library selection was conducted by the LEAP project team in October and November 2013. Given Worldreader's existing presence and expertise in Western Kenya, libraries were selected from Kisumu, Kakamega and Busia counties. See Figure 1 for a map showing the libraries' general location.



Figure 1: Map of project area

During project selection, Worldreader staff met with local library advocates in the Kisumu area who then connected staff to relevant stakeholders in other districts. These representatives distributed applications to surrounding libraries (see Appendix 1 for application materials), publicized Project LEAP, and then collected completed applications and submitted them to Worldreader. Thirty-six applications were received and 13 were shortlisted, each of which Worldreader

then visited and interviewed before making the final selection. Selection criteria included:

- Fulfillment of research design requirements (i.e. location, affiliation, etc.)
- Presence and commitment of at least one full-time staff member to oversee the program; engagement of that staff member
- Thoroughness of application
- Accessibility of the library to the general community
- Alignment of application short answers with Project LEAP priorities

Trainings and Project Launches

Librarians were trained by Worldreader staff on e-reader operation, program management, monitoring and evaluation and other topics from March 12th through the 14th in Kisumu City (see Appendix 2 for training materials). Project managers then returned to their communities to train other library staff, volunteers and some patrons from March 17th through the 19th. This generally follows the format of Worldreader's trainings in school programs, whereby the responsibility of training students or community members falls to local teachers, librarians and/or leaders as soon as possible. In Worldreader's experience, empowering project managers to train others in their communities, schools and libraries is the most effective method for ensuring quick project adoption and local relevancy.

Table 3: Community Trainings and Launch Events

	Library	Training Participants	Launch Date	Launch Attendees
1	Busia Community Library	5	4/3/14	200
2	JF Omenge Community Library	8	5/10/14	N/A
3	Kakamega Area Library	8	3/20/2014	200
4	Kisumu Public Library	8	3/21/2014	170
5	Konditi Primary School Library	6	N/A	N/A
6	Nyilima Community Library	10	3/22/2014	150
7	SAIDE Community Library	2	5/4/14	20
8	Shikalakala Primary School Library	6	3/25/2014	300
Total		66		1,040

Project launches were held late March through May, with the number of attendees ranging from 20 to 300. Launches, which are also a key component of Worldreader's school programs, create excitement and buy-in in the local communities. LEAP launches were organized by project managers and included entertainment from students and other community groups, e-reader demonstrations and hands-on lessons, Q&A sessions, and more. The launches also served to raise overall awareness of local library services, and were attended by a diverse range of individuals, from students and teachers to district officials and representatives from the US Embassy in Nairobi.⁷

Baseline Methodology

Project LEAP aims to gather operational learnings that can be applied to the expansion of e-reader programs in libraries throughout Kenya and across Africa, in addition to data on the impact of e-readers in library contexts. Key research questions include:

⁷ Local media also covered some of the launches. These pieces can be found at the following links: ["NGO Launches E – Reading Programme In Kakamega"](#), ["E-READER launched in Busia"](#).

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- Do the type of books available drive the number of patrons attracted to use the library?
 - Do the number of books available limit the number of new patrons attracted to use the library?
 - Under what conditions will e-readers be allowed to be removed from the premises?
 - What is required to deploy and integrate e-readers in libraries?
 - Does access to e-readers increase a library's usage by increasing the number of patrons who visit?
 - Do e-readers encourage library patrons to read more?
 - What is the cost-effectiveness of using e-readers in libraries?
 - What is required to scale this pilot nationwide and beyond?

This baseline study constitutes the first step towards answering these and other questions, and will be used for comparison for the midterm and final reports. Baseline data was gathered from applications and self-reporting baseline forms distributed to project managers. The self-reporting tool requested data on library patronage, activities and more for the month of January, prior to project launches, and is compatible with the monthly monitoring reports that project managers will complete for the duration of the program (see Appendix 3 for monitoring and evaluation tools).

Worldreader noted inconsistencies with some of the self-reported data, and is providing ongoing support to project managers to build capacity around data collection and improve self-reporting in the future. For the purposes of this report, the self-reporting baseline tool and application forms were compared to triangulate data, and the most reliable data source was used.

In addition, patron surveys were conducted with 38 patrons across seven of the selected libraries.⁸ While this is a relatively small sample, responses to the surveys provide interesting insights into patron behaviors, attitudes, and ideas about how to improve their local libraries. The quantitative findings are further enriched by qualitative data and anecdotal information collected through informal interviews, site visits, and general interactions with the selected libraries and project managers.

⁸ Surveys were conducted at all eight libraries initially, however data from one library was too unreliable to include in the analysis.

Key Insights

Library Location and Affiliation

LEAP's original research design specified that four libraries would be selected in rural communities and four in urban or peri-urban communities, and that of those eight, half would be KNLS-affiliated and half would be community libraries. During the initial library scouting and application process, the team found fewer community libraries than expected, particularly in rural areas, and even fewer who met the project's selection criteria.

Moreover, the team uncovered many libraries located in schools that were serving as public libraries in rural areas. These project sites, known as reference libraries, serve a cluster of schools and are open to the public outside of school hours. While not technically affiliated with KNLS, they benefit from the national library service's "mobile library program," and receive a rotation of books regularly from KNLS' urban libraries. These reference libraries fulfill an important need in rural communities – without them community members would have almost no access to library materials.

"E-readers will give our patrons a big boost. We have students who come to the library everyday to do their homework because they would not otherwise access books. They will now access course books as well as other reading material. Some of these children don't even have shoes, but they value reading and they come here everyday."

-Project LEAP Librarian (urban public library)

As these reference libraries are a vital part of the local public library ecosystem, the Worldreader team determined that it was important to include them in the pilot. As such, two reference libraries were selected among the rural library group (see Table 4 for a breakdown of libraries by location and affiliation). For these project sites, a focus has been placed on encouraging project managers to open up the school library to community members as much as possible, and Worldreader staff will continue to follow-up with project managers to monitor the diversity of their patron populations.

Table 4: Libraries by Location and Affiliation					
Library	Location		Affiliation		
	Urban	Rural	Public	Independent	Reference
Busia Public Library	X		X		
JF Omenge Community Library	X			X	
Kakamega Area Library	X		X		
Kisumu Public Library	X		X		
Konditi Primary School Library		X			X
Nyilima Community Library		X	X		
SAIDE Community Library		X		X	
Shikalakala Primary School Library		X			X
Total	4	4	4	2	2

Library Patronage

Libraries vary in patron size from 200 to 100,000, and the median number of monthly patrons was 12,000. Unsurprisingly, larger urban libraries tend to have more patrons and rural libraries have fewer. See Table 5 for a list of selected libraries and patron information.

The median percentage of female patrons was 47%, and there appears to be little correlation between location of library or library size and female patronage. It is interesting, however that LEAP libraries estimate significantly higher female patronage than the national average of 28% female patrons among KNLS libraries.⁹ Project LEAP aims to drive further increases in female patronage with specific programs focused on women and girls, and moreover to “help to overcome the problem of gender differences in reading acquisition by maintaining collections of materials that appeal to males and females.”¹⁰

⁹ Goethe-Institut, Kenya (n.d.).

¹⁰ Krolak, L (2005).

Library	Location	Affiliation	Average number of monthly patrons	Aprox. % female
Busia Community Library	Urban	Public	N/A	N/A
JF Omenge Community Library	Urban	Independent	430	47%
Kakamega Area Library	Urban	Public	12,000	30%
Kisumu Public Library	Urban	Public	100,000	52%
Konditi Primary School Library	Rural	Reference	765	37%
Nyilima Community Library	Rural	Public	20,000	45%
SAIDE Community Library	Rural	Independent	200	60%
Shikalakala Primary School Library	Rural	Reference	28,000	60%

*Numbers are approximate, based on self-reported data from Project LEAP applications. It should be noted these numbers do not reflect unique patrons.

The age of the libraries' patron populations was skewed towards younger users, with reference libraries being more likely to attract the youngest patrons. See Table 6 for the libraries' patron age distribution.

Age range	Percentage of users
0-5	8%
6 - 13 years	40%
14 - 24 years	30%
25 - 50 years	16%
51 years +	6%

*Data obtained from Project LEAP applications. One library did not report data by age group and as such, is omitted from this analysis. Worldreader staff is working with the library to procure this information, and should it become available these numbers will be updated.

Almost 80% of the patrons are ages 24 and below, meaning that children and youth are significantly overrepresented among LEAP library users, as 63.5% of Kenya's population was under the age of 25 in 2009 according to Kenya's

national census.¹¹ While an exact age breakdown of registered KNLS-facility users was unavailable, the Goethe-Institut found in 2011-2012 62% of patrons were aged 21-30 years, whereas 4.7 million adults (62%) and 2.9 million children (38%) were registered as library users.¹²

A logistic regression of patron survey data further revealed that patrons aged 24 and under are two-and-a-half times more likely to visit the library multiple times per week than those ages 25 and older. This holds true across library type and location. This data highlights first, an untapped patron group among older adults, and second, a clear need to provide library content and activities that engage young people, as they are most active users of the project libraries. According to the Goethe-Institut, youth in Kenya generally use libraries for leisure reading, studying for examinations, and as hubs of social activities, and 64% of students who visit the library mainly do so to prepare for examinations, while children frequent the library mostly during school holidays.¹³ Such factors will be important to consider as LEAP project managers structure programs for both young people and adults moving forward.

Library Collection

“All age groups must find material relevant to their needs. Collections and services have to include all types of appropriate media and modern technologies as well as traditional materials. High quality and relevance to local needs and conditions are fundamental. Material must reflect current trends and the evolution of society, as well as the memory of human endeavour and imagination.”

UNESCO, *Public Library Manifesto*, 1949

The median collection size among LEAP libraries was 8,000, whereas the maximum was 50,000 and the minimum was 880. Table 7 shows library collection size, current collection focus, and book requests for the selected libraries. Often times librarians requested *more* of the types of books already in their collections, indicating that while the collections may encompass a broad

¹¹ UNFPA (2013), “Kenya Population Situational Analysis.” Accessed at: <http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/kenya/drive/FINALPSAREPORT.pdf>

¹² Goethe-Institut, Kenya (n.d.).

¹³ Ibid

range of genres and types, generally there is not enough quantity or variety, or that the most relevant books within a particular genre are missing. For example, many libraries have incomplete sets of textbooks and study guides, and requested more of these for specific school levels and subjects.

This data is relatively consistent with other studies on library collections in Kenya, which show that an average *public* library (which is generally better-resourced than a community library) had fewer than 300 books in 2005, and by 2011 had around 5,000.¹⁴ While KNLS has demonstrated an upward trend in number of books purchased, the number of new books acquired has only been one book per registered member per year.¹⁵

When asked to provide general feedback on their community libraries, 26% of patrons surveyed requested more content or more varied content, and five of eight LEAP project managers reported that increasing the variety of books available at their libraries was a primary motivation for applying for the e-reader program.

Looking through the shelves of the pilot libraries, particularly in more rural locations, one frequently sees many higher-level books from the US and Europe (such as romance and mystery novels) and many books that are out of date or in poor condition. These books often do not match up with the ages or reading levels of the patrons typically served by the libraries. Moreover, some of the imported and donated material may be less relevant for the local cultural context.

¹⁴ Kinya, Dr. Henry DS (2011).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Table 7: Current Library Collections and Requests			
Library Name	Collection Size	Current collection focus	Content wanted
Busia Community Library	N/A	Non-fiction, Textbooks, teachers guides and study aids	Textbooks, teachers guides and study aids
JF Omange Community Library	8,000	Fiction/ Literary works, Textbooks, teachers guides and study aids, reference	Textbooks, teachers guides and study aids
Kakamega Area Library	31,448	Fiction/ Literary works, Textbooks, teachers guides and study aids	Fiction/ Literary works, Textbooks, teachers guides and study aids
Kisumu Public Library	50,000	Fiction, Textbooks, teachers guides and study aids, Beginning readers	Fiction/ Literary works, Textbooks, teachers guides and study aids
Konditi Primary School Library	880	Fiction/ Literary works, Textbooks, teachers guides and study aids, Reference	Reference, Fiction/ Literary works, Textbooks, teachers guides and study aids
Nyilima Community Library	24,000	General reading	Fiction/ Literary Works
SAIDE Community Library	900	Fiction/ Literary works, Textbooks, teachers guides and study aids, Beginning readers	Textbooks, teachers guides and study aids
Shikalakala Primary School Library	4,500	Textbooks, teachers guides and study aids, Beginning readers, Reference	Textbooks, teachers guides and study aids, Literary works/ fiction, Reference

However, anecdotal evidence also suggests that patrons at LEAP libraries are hungry for reading material in general. While visiting SAIDE Community Library, Worldreader staff noticed an older Kenya Airways magazine on a table. When the librarian was asked about it, he said it was very popular with younger patrons, stating that brief entertainment was precious for the library's patrons, who generally have little access to reading material.

Taking into account the existing collections at the libraries, along with patron demographics, Worldreader made efforts to tailor content on the e-readers to library needs (see Table 8 for a profile of the content uploaded to the e-readers

and Appendix 4 for the complete book list). Furthermore, e-readers were designated either into “adult” and “child” categories, and appropriate content was uploaded onto each device according to its designated age group. Adult and child e-readers were then distributed to libraries based on demographics.

Genre	% of collection	Origin	% of collection
Fiction/ Literary Works	51%	North America	35%
Beginning Readers	26%	Europe and UK	11%
Textbooks, teachers guides and study aids	16%	Australia	6%
Nonfiction	5%	Africa	48%
Games	2%	Kenya	25%
Reference	1%	South Africa	11%
		Ghana	8%
Language		Malawi	2%
Kiswahili	20%	Nigeria	1%
English	80%	Zimbabwe	1%
		Tanzania	< 1%

LEAP libraries were provided with 25 e-readers containing 200 books each for a total of 5,000 additional books per library. This is a significant increase in the libraries’ collection size considering that the median collection size before Project LEAP was 8,000.

The 25-e-reader model differs from that typically employed by Worldreader in schools, which includes 50 e-readers with 100 books each. This modification addresses the diverse range of patrons libraries generally serve, which requires more varied content. Additional books will be added throughout the year, with libraries that successfully complete monitoring reports being allotted more funds for additional books, which may be self-selected by project managers and/or patrons. The LEAP team anticipates that self-selection of books will help create more enthusiasm for the project among library staff and users.

Of particular note are the African books from uploaded to the e-readers. Worldreader works with nearly one hundred African publishers to digitize literature, textbooks and other materials that are relevant to readers across the continent. Popular African titles uploaded onto the LEAP e-readers include:

- ***Grandmother’s Winning Smile*, by Stanley Gazemba (Imada Publishers, Kenya):** Kinuthia's hopes for completing primary school, and the bright future it would bring, are on the verge of crashing down after his

father sells the family cow and leaves Kinuthia with his aging grandmother. Determined to prevent Kinuthia from joining dropping out of school, his grandmother embarks on a journey to ensure her only grandchild has a chance at a better future.

- ***The Baobabs of Tete*, by Kari Dako (Sub Saharan, Ghana):** This book takes us on a whirlwind trip around Africa in a tour de force collection of perfectly crafted vignettes, each offering us an eye-opening glimpse into a starkly depicted reality filled with a cast of complex characters.
- ***Let Me Tell You: Kenyan Coastal Girls Talk about Love, School, Sex and Football*, edited by Sarah Forde (Storymoja, Kenya):** In eleven insightful interviews, this book reveals the lives, thoughts, challenges and hopes of teenage girls living on Kenya's coast. ¹⁶

Library Staff

"Today the role of libraries and professional librarians is changing worldwide. They are no longer passive keepers and preservers of books; rather, they have evolved to become facilitators of information and lifelong learning opportunities with an emphasis on service, identifying user needs and communicating solutions."

UNESCO, "The role of libraries in the creation of literate environments"

Each of the eight LEAP libraries has designated a project manager (who is generally a full time staff member at the library) to support the e-reader program. Project managers are required to attend regular training sessions, complete LEAP reporting requirements, and will develop activities relevant to their patrons' interests. Worldreader will regularly bring together Project Managers to brainstorm ideas, troubleshoot issues, and document best practices, in an effort to ensure that LEAP activities are relevant to specific library contexts as possible.

While the experience and background of project managers at the project sites varies, all have completed secondary school at a minimum. Five of the eight librarians have some form of post-secondary education, and every full-time

¹⁶ Expanded descriptions of each title can be found on the Amazon Kindle Store:
<http://www.amazon.com/kindle-store-ebooks-newspapers-blogs/b?node=133141011>

librarian has received some form of library training. See an outline of the staff at each library in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Library Staff, and Librarian Education and Training				
Library Name	Full-time Staff	Education	Part-time Staff	Volunteers
Busia Community Library	1	University	0	2
JF Omenge Community Library	2	Diploma	0	0
Kakamega Area Library	16	Post-graduate, university, diploma	3	2
Kisumu Public Library	15	University, diploma	0	5
Konditi Primary School Library	1	Secondary	2	0
Nyilima Community Library	8	Secondary	0	0
SAIDE Community Library	1	Secondary	1	5
Shikalakala Primary School Library	1	Diploma	4	11
Median	1.5		0.5	2

The median number of staff is just over one per library, the average number of volunteers is two, and the average number part-time staff is less than one. Rural libraries with smaller patron populations and smaller collections generally have fewer staff, and these staff often play multiple roles (particularly as teachers in addition to being librarians).

Six of the eight LEAP librarians (75%) reported using technology at their libraries, however only half of them used technology in patron programs.¹⁷ Librarians regularly used computers for record keeping and other administrative tasks. Over the course of the pilot, the Worldreader team will continue working with library staff to build their capacity and comfort using the e-readers and training patrons on e-reader usage. The project team hypothesizes that this will have some spillover effect on the librarians' use of technology.

¹⁷ Computers were regularly used for record keeping and other administrative tasks.

Library Activities

"Books and libraries are often seen as redundant in societies that are mainly based on oral traditions and practices. In such societies, people stop reading once formal education is completed as they derive more pleasure from the oral and performing arts – talking, singing, dancing, socializing – than from the rather private and individual reading of a book."

Totemeyer (1994), cited in UNESCO's
"The role of libraries in the creation of literate environments"

The selected libraries all play central roles in their communities, not just as centers of information, but also as hubs of social interaction. All of the libraries already host a number of community outreach programs. For example:

- **Busia Public Library** has a street youth outreach program that includes training and activities with tablets. Library staff reports that this initiative has helped boost the youth's self-confidence.
- **Shikalakala Primary School Library** organizes student book clubs and plans to host parent reading groups on agriculture, health and business skills.
- **Kisumu Public Library** hosts an American Corner (sponsored by the US Embassy in Nairobi), headed by an enthusiastic librarian and LEAP project manager who actively works on bringing ICT initiatives to rural communities. The US State Department has recently given a grant to a local filmmaker who will work with this project manager to initiate a citizen's journalism program that will train youth in the region to become iReporters (with support from CNN).

42% of patron survey respondents stated that they had attended library programs or events in the last year. Such programs are particularly important for engaging those patrons who may not come to the libraries to read independently. Moreover, one national survey found that nearly half (48%) of those not currently

using libraries in Kenya had no awareness of their existence.¹⁸ Such data indicates that public programs and activities utilizing the e-readers are also important for raising awareness of the libraries in local communities.

Recognizing the importance of community activities for project success, pilot libraries will hold specific e-reader programs as a part of LEAP. Project managers will periodically complete activity proposals, with the most organized and innovative receiving funding from Worldreader. Project managers will provide a pre- and post- activity reports documenting lessons learned, number of attendees, and more. Worldreader will use this information in developing activities for future library projects.

As a result of the activity component of Project LEAP, Worldreader expects patron attendance at *all* library programs to steadily increase. Indeed, some project managers have already reported increased enthusiasm and more patrons through their doors since the Project LEAP launch ceremonies.

Technology Programs

The availability of technology at the eight pilot libraries varies widely. Five of the eight libraries (62.5%) have at least one functioning computer, and three of the eight libraries have internet access (37.5%). See Table 10 for a breakdown of available technology at each library.¹⁹

It is not surprising that the project sites with more computers and internet access are generally the larger urban libraries. In fact, the only libraries that reported having public technology programs for patrons were located in urban areas. These programs included computer classes, video presentations, and assistance with computer-based research.

"The shelf life for a printed children's book in the library is 6 months. With e-readers children will have access to books for up to four years without replacements. If anything, they will add to the library of books. This is a major cost saving for Kenya National Library Services."

-Caroline Kayoro, Kenya National Library Service

¹⁸ EIFL (2011), "Perceptions of Public Libraries in Africa." Accessed at: <http://www.eifl.net/perception-study>

¹⁹ This table outlines general availability of technology at each library, and only indicates public programs utilizing technology where specified

Table 10: Technology at selected libraries

Library Name	Setting	Affiliation	Electricity	Computers	Internet	Wifi	Tech Programs
Busia Community Library	Urban	Public	100%	0	N	N/A	N
JF Omenge Community Library	Urban	Independent	25%	1	N	N	Y
Kakamega Area Library	Urban	Public	100%	4	Y	N	Y
Kisumu Public Library	Urban	Public	100%	12	Y	Y	Y
Konditi Primary School Library	Rural	Reference	25%	0	N	N/A	N
Nyilima Community Library	Rural	Public	100%	1	N	N/A	N
SAIDE Community Library	Rural	Independent	75%	1	Y	N	N
Shikalakala Primary School Library	Rural	Reference	25%	0	N	N/A	N

Despite the fact that technology resources and public technology programs are relatively limited at libraries (particularly among more rural libraries), over half of patron survey respondents (55%) reported using at least one library technology over the past 12 months. This indicates that while some libraries may not have formal technology programs or classes (many librarians report only using computers or other technology for record-keeping) informal learning is going on where computers and other technology are present. Indeed, 29% of survey respondents reported receiving one-to-one advice on how to find information on the internet or use a computer. So while only three of eight libraries have formal technology programs, librarians are clearly making time to teach computer or technological skills to patrons, at least unofficially.

Such efforts are clearly whetting patrons' appetites for more technology. When asked to provide general feedback on LEAP libraries, 37% of survey respondents stated they would like additional technology programs. This indicates that patron interest is high when it comes to technology-based interventions, which is a

promising note for the possibility of Project LEAP to generate excitement and more patron traffic for the libraries.

Conclusions, Next Steps and Lessons Learned

The findings presented in this report highlights interesting trends among the LEAP pilot libraries. However the real question at hand is how these trends will affect the success of Project LEAP in achieving its program goals.

With regards to the influence of collection size and diversity on patron population, we see that libraries with larger, more diverse populations tend to have larger collections. However looking at this data alone, we cannot determine cause and effect; libraries with larger populations may be more successful expanding their collections, or libraries with larger collections may be more successful recruiting library users. We do know, however, that both patrons and librarians want more content and more diverse content in their libraries, regardless of that library's current size, location or affiliation.

And while this content has to be relevant to library users and potential users, we see across the board that young people are the most active users of Project LEAP libraries, regardless of library type, size or location. This points to an undeniable need to engage young people in library contexts, and also significant potential for outreach to the relatively underutilized adult patron population. Regarding questions on success factors for the deployment of e-readers, the findings presented here demonstrate, as expected, urban libraries tend to be better resourced in terms of staff and books, and generally provide more technological resources to patrons. Worldreader expects that, due to these resources and previous experience working with technology-based interventions, these urban libraries will experience more success in the technical implementation of the project. This includes developing policies for e-reader borrowing, maintaining the e-readers and charging them regularly, and training patrons on e-reader usage.

However, because patrons of rural libraries are less likely to have access to other technology resources, the project team expects that LEAP will drive greater increases in patronage among rural and smaller libraries due to high levels of excitement around the e-readers. Because the addition of 5,000 books is also

more significant for these smaller libraries, Worldreader also expect to see greater increases in patronage and patron diversity among these project sites.

In the coming months, Worldreader will work with project managers to plan and execute e-reader activities, define off-site borrowing processes for e-readers, and continue to build capacity on monitoring and evaluation. The forthcoming midterm report will present initial project progress and lessons learned from the first months of implementation. However, if these baseline findings are any indication, the integrative approach of Project LEAP—combining context-appropriate technology with relevant content, partnership, and community activities—has the potential to have a positive, lasting impact on Kenya’s libraries, their staff and users.

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Appendices

[Appendix 1](#): Application materials

[Appendix 2](#): Training materials

[Appendix 3](#): Monitoring and evaluation tools

[Appendix 4](#): Book Lists