Community of Practice Workshop:
Getting the Right Books to the Kids
Book Distribution to Schools and Students

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What is the Rationale?

• Before launching a book provision process, consider the following:
  – What books are needed? Grade levels, supplementary/general readers, textbooks;
  – How will books be evaluated and selected?
  – How will books be made available to readers? Schools, libraries, general market;
  – What expertise will be required? Authors, illustrators, curriculum developers, publishers, printers, distributors, booksellers;
  – Meet with key players to establish common understanding and clarify roles, responsibilities and timelines: For example,
    ✓ Overall coordinator, contact office for dealing with questions and other issues;
    ✓ Where and when books should be delivered and by whom;
    ✓ Payment procedure;
    ✓ Community involvement;
    ✓ Success indicators.
What is the Role of Booksellers?

• Often considered middlemen between publishers and readers, but critical link ensuring:
  – Access to books for readers--they source other books for readers;
  – Continuous availability for purchase outside schools and for libraries;
  – Ongoing market feedback to publishers on quality, pricing, and relevance.

• Market response generally accepted as measure of quality and relevance.

• A network of booksellers is healthy for the book industry, especially for opening up rural markets.
What if Booksellers are few or non-existent?

- Direct delivery to schools by printers, publishers, distributors;
- Local/district collection point: Education or Local government office;
- Central (capital) receiving and warehousing with onward distribution;
- Identify how to improve distribution:
  - Support booksellers’ efforts, e.g. by cooperative/joint transportation and delivery;
  - Involve PTAs and communities in tracking and verifying deliveries;
  - Speed payment to suppliers: most are very small businesses;
- Place multiple copies in libraries
- Permit copying (Malawi example)
Why Do We Need Libraries?

• Libraries are:
  – Supplementary to provision of books in schools
  – Repository for textbooks with limited availability
  – Excellent resource for other reading material (supplementary readers and reference texts)

• Role of Communities
  – Community reading rooms/resource centers