



15 May 2022

To: **Principals, Subject Advisors, Parents, Teachers, Departmental Heads and Library Information Services (LIS) Coordinators.**

Topic: **What is Africa day and how communities can use it to promote reading.**

Message Objective:

To encourage meaningful participation of communities in celebrating Africa day.

On the 25 May 1963, representatives of 32 African states gathered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to form the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) now known as the African Union. During the formation of the OAU, only two-thirds of African countries had been liberated from colonialism. The coming together of these states to form the OAU was aimed at supporting the liberation of other African states that were still under colonial rule, as well as to foster political and economic unity and the integration of the continent. It was at this conference for the formation of the OAU, that a decision was made that the peoples of Africa will, on 25 May each year, commemorate Africa Freedom Day, later renamed Africa Liberation Day, and now known as Africa Day (www.gov.za).

According to Train (2007), family campaigns are essential in bringing communities together. Africa day can be used to promote reading through family reading campaigns. South Africa is a diverse country with a lot of people coming from different parts of the continent. For instance, families from different nationalities including South Africa can use their churches or social societies to celebrate Africa day by creating a virtual gathering to share how they promote reading in homes.

Schools can coordinate virtual Expos as a platform where people from various countries can showcase their cultures and tourists' sites in a form of Exhibition posters and PowerPoint presentations. Africa is a continent that is rich with minerals and exciting tourists' sites which can be accessible by anyone who live in it. So, Virtual Expos are essential to get people out of negative media exposure and encourage them to read more about the beauty of African heritage sites and developments achieved by Africa to date.

In addition, Africans has a poor history of documenting valuable information such as medicinal herbs and traditional values due to colonial oppression and neglect. Dent (2006) encourages establishment of libraries in rural communities. Days such as Africa day can be used to get more African writers to document information that could be archived in community libraries so that future generations can read information



that is not distorted by any colonial or European influence. This information can also be shared throughout all the countries in the continent through governments websites and other social platforms.

Moreover, community-based organisations can play a vital role in coordinating reading seminars that can engage community members to share valuable information about the liberation struggles which African countries have gone through. Communities can also be engaged in dialogues on African Renaissance and how Africa can best participate in the global world to deal with demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

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References

1. Barton D and Hamilton M (1998) Local Literacies: Reading and Writing in on Community. London and New York: Routledge.
2. Dent VF (2006a) Modelling the rural community library: characteristics of the Kitengesa Library in rural Uganda. *New Library World* 107 (1220/1221): 16–30.
3. www.gov.za