

Implementation Report

Project: EEA

Activity: Textbooks Procurement

Implementer: Asenga Booksellers **Implementation Period:** 13th September 2018

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To procure USD 3'000 worth of textbooks for St Ambrose Primary School

TASK NARRATION

This is the second set of books to be procured for St Ambrose Matibi Primary School in a space of two years. The last procurement was in 2016 and it was also worth USD3'000. The latest procurement was supposed to have been implemented in 2017 but the necessary documents were slow to gather. Also there was a very slow pace in switching from one project to the next due to the same setback. So, this project was among the 2017 intended and approved projects.

When the 2018 project list was drafted, the textbooks project also got another chance to be listed and this was on January 17th 2018. Fortunately the project was put on first priority but unfortunately the school suddenly got preoccupied with a new project to build an examinations-compliant office, which they communicated to FFM on March 3rd 2018. On March 16th the school head presented quotations for the said office only but she had promised to bring quotations for 6 project assignments including textbooks, furniture and ceilings. The Projects Coordinator even noted anomalies with the submitted Office quotations, which made it even impossible to begin any processing, let alone any implementation.

Promises continued to come but surprises never ceased as well. On June 22nd the school head presented quotations for replacement of old windowpanes, a completely new assignment which was not even among the approved list. This project was turned down as the Projects Coordinator pressed on with demanding textbooks quotations as per priority list. Finally the quotations came and the funders were quick to transfer the quoted USD3'000 to Asenga

Booksellers. The transfer was made on August 26th. The Trust account was not yet ready for transaction and hence the fund was made directly into the suppliers' account.

The booksellers reported that the wired money had reflected in their account on September 13th with \$5 shortfall due to bank charges. The textbooks were delivered to the school on September 26th, after 13 unreasonable delay days. The following picture shows the deputy school head with the school kids that offloaded the textbooks when they arrived.



SUCSESSES AND LESSONS LEARNT

Successes

- i. The procurement of textbooks finally took place.
- ii. Smuggling of unplanned projects was prevented, the same as switching of priorities.

- iii. The school made an arrangement with the booksellers to supply \$3'000 worth of books regardless of shortfalls caused by bank charges.
- iv. The principle of one-assignment-at-a-time was upheld.

Lessons

- i. The unnecessary delays to submit quotations may imply that sometimes the school's attention to projects is divided.
- ii. Easy changing of project priorities may mean little time to think through projects at planning level.
- iii. Although the school had earlier preferred an office and windowpane repairs, they greatly appreciated the textbooks as they recounted the gap it covered in the book:pupil ratio. The book:pupil ratio ranged from 1:10 fir kindergarten to an average of 1:4 for the rest of classes.

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Challenges

- i. For a time it seemed the school was undecided about assignment priorities.
- ii. The school considered the Examinations Office an emergency and tried to prove it but it became confusing when they added windowpanes again as an emergency.

Recommendations

- i. There is an apparent challenge that the issue of emergencies is raised to avoid paying beneficiary commitment. It is advisable to minimise the funding of emergencies unless life is in danger. FFM should define its projects as primarily (or even strictly) developmental in nature so as to emphasise partnerships and justify beneficiary commitment.
- ii. Paying directly into the booksellers' account was not the wisest way to transfer the funds but it was necessitated by slow processing of the Trust account. Now that the

Trust account is finally ready for transactions, project funds may better be deposited into this account for onward pay-outs.

- iii. Sometimes the funders worry more than the beneficiaries about the projects. It is recommended that the funders come after the beneficiaries in any developmental activity. This means that for future projects (furniture, ceilings and Office), the school should deposit 20% of project fund into Trust account to turn on the project. Less preferred projects will technically fall out of question and there will be no doubts about priority.