

THE POVERTY -LITERACY CONNECTION: INTRODUCING THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

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To overcome poverty, serious investments must be made into literacy, and literacy further extended into education and lifelong learning. Poverty reduction is only possible when more emphasis is placed on literacy (Baptiste & Nyanungo 2007: 19; UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006: 19). In households where parents are illiterate, they might not immediately see the benefits of literacy and education. In research literature households with no reading culture make it difficult for learners to perform well at school (Machet & Tiemensma 2009: 62; Milam 2008: 11). Therefore, children who are brought up in such households might not have the full support of parents investing into their education. This will result into difficulties to break the cycle of poverty, that leads into their adult life, and in return create a repetitive cycle of poverty within their own families (South African Human Rights Commission 2014: 18; Gradin 2012: 198). Public libraries are anti-poverty fighting agents (Mchombu & Cadbury 2006: 18) and identified as the solution to reduce poverty (Davis 2009: 137; Nassimbeni & May 2006: 20). Public libraries reach into the core of illiteracy by focusing on Early Childhood Development programmes (Hart & Nassimbeni 2013: 19; Nordtveit 2008: 417), specifically by exposing children to books and reading through storytelling.). Public libraries nurture the skills, opportunities and choices available to children and adults and thus enable them to live a meaningful life and to make a social and economic contribution to the community. In addition to this public libraries create a safe and free environment, welcoming everyone regardless of race, class, religion, background, by giving to them a meeting place and learning possibilities.