Partnership experience with community libraries in Burkina Faso

Michael Kevane
Santa Clara University
Santa Clara, CA USA
mkevane@scu.edu
www.mkevane.com

Abstract:

This paper describes the various levels of partnerships involved in developing community libraries in Burkina Faso. The paper is grounded in the experience of Friends of African Village Libraries, a small non-profit non-governmental organization that has established and supported 13 village libraries in Burkina Faso and has grant funding to establish another 21 village libraries in the 2015-2016 period. Three levels of partnership are described. First, at the village level, FAVL has been challenged to have close working relationships with local authorities. Burkina Faso only decentralized political administration in 2006. Rural communes were established and mayors elected. But the quality and motivations of rural mayors vary widely. Funding for rural communes is insecure and non-transparent. The paper discusses a formal "convention" document that has been signed with numerous mayors, and discusses practical implementation issues. Second, partnership with national library authorities has been difficult and is constantly shifting. In Burkina Faso, public libraries are supported by a division in the Ministry of Culture. This division has been underfunded, and there are numerous allegations (including one investigation) on corruption at the senior level. There is little public accountability (no publication of reports or independent evaluation). FAVL continues to engage with national authorities, and personnel is renewed there is periodic hope for a genuine partnership. Third, FAVL partners with other non-profit organizations. These outside partnerships, with EIFL, Rotary International, and Catholic Relief Services, bring different challenges, especially in terms of reporting and accounting. The paper will give several strategies for working with such organizations.

Keywords: Libraries, Africa, Evaluation, Books, Children.

Introduction

Libraries are important for development, and promoting public libraries should be a concern for public policy across Africa (Forsyth, 2005; Ojiambo & Kasalu, 2015). Rural areas of Africa are particularly deprived when it comes to library services and access to books and reading programs (Issak, 2000). The challenges to the public library movement in Africa are significant (Dent, Goodman, & Kevane, 2014; Elbert, Fuegi, & Lipeikaite, 2012; Stranger-Johannessen, Asselin, & Doiron, 2015).

The establishment and management of community libraries in rural Africa depends on partnerships with local government, national government, and non-profit organizations. This paper considers the experience of Friends of African Village Libraries (FAVL) to explore some basic priorities and principles for how these partnerships can be most productive in ensuring that reading publics in African countries have access to books. FAVL is a small non-profit, non-governmental organization that since 2001 has established and supported 13 village libraries in Burkina Faso and has funding to establish another 21 village libraries in the 2015-2016 period. FAVL also supports libraries in northern Ghana and Uganda.

Let us start with some math. The government of Burkina Faso says the country has about 8,000 villages, each with about 1500 people. That is, about 12 million people out of the population of 16 million live in villages. About 50% of the rural population is not literate and will not likely be literate. Let us be realistic: about 70% of those who are literate will probably never be very interested in reading a book. So that leaves about 225 people who might be readers in each village, or about 1.8 million potential readers in Burkina Faso. These readers have almost no access to books. Burkina Faso has only about 50 community libraries serving rural villages and small towns.[1] The situation in Burkina Faso is not that different from the rest of the continent, though it is one of the more rural countries. Let us suppose Burkina is typical, and let us concentrate on the poorest 500 million people in sub-Saharan Africa. If the ratio of potential rural readers to population is similar to that of Burkina Faso where it is 1.8 million to 16 million, or about 11%, then there are about 55 million potential village readers in sub-Saharan Africa who currently have no access to public libraries with a decent selection of books.

Providing these 55 million readers with access to community libraries over the next 20 years will be a massive, but doable, public action. Let us do some rough budgetary math. To serve 55 million readers scattered in villages with 225 readers in each, sub-Saharan Africa needs at least 200,000 small community libraries. In FAVL's experience, about $8000 is needed to refurbish a building to serve as a community library. So that is about $1.6 billion. If each library has 1500 books, then providing access would require about 300 million books. At $6 per book, the cost would be $1.8 billion. Operating these libraries at 20 hours a week with "barefoot librarians" would cost about $5000 annually, so this is $1 billion per year. An endowment for recurring costs for 20 years might then be on the order of $15 billion. If we think of this as a commitment over

---

[1] Access to books is not much better in the largest cities. The city of Ouagadougou with population of about two million has one large public library and a handful of smaller non-governmental libraries such as the French cultural center and American cultural center library.

20 years, so that by 2035 almost everyone has access to a small public library, then we are talking about $1 billion a year.[2]

There is enormous potential for waste with such a massive undertaking. This paper offers a number of observations and suggestions emerging from the experience of FAVL over the past fourteen years. FAVL's philosophy differs from that of many organizations. We have five core principles: (1) we are very frugal (we refurbish an existing building rather than build from scratch); (2) we think providing reading services to children and youth is "low hanging fruit" for many countries and localities and so should be prioritized; (3) we do not worry about not being perfect; (4) we believe that five small libraries are usually better than one big library; (5) we may be wrong about the previous four principles. We take inspiration from the public library movement of the United States that started in the 1830s and expanded rapidly, well before Andrew Carnegie's philanthropy turned libraries into expensive temples. Back then, libraries were started in corner rooms of city hall, operated by women's clubs, staffed by eager volunteers and para-professionals, and did not expect citizens to travel 20km to the "big city" library to get access to books. Of course we all would like more, but our philosophy is that 20 one room libraries, staffed by a local high school graduate, and close to kids in villages, are a better use of philanthropic dollars than showcase urban cathedrals that are rapidly turned into cavernous cybercafés.

Partnerships are crucial to making a multi-billion dollar investment in community libraries cost-effective. But there are challenges in partnerships to expand community libraries in rural Africa. The remainder of this paper discusses FAVL's experiences in Burkina Faso.

Local partnerships
FAVL began establishing village libraries in 2001. At that time, there was no clear local partner for our organization in the villages we worked with in southwestern Burkina Faso. Like many African village settings, the formal apparatus of government was present in theory but largely absent in practice. Political authority in rural areas in Burkina Faso was vested in *haut commissaires* (High Commissioners) at the level of large regions and *préfets* (equivalent of district commissioners) who had jurisdiction over smaller departments of 50 villages with population of about 65,000. The haut commissaire and préfet were civil servants in the Ministry of Territorial Administration. Both offices continue to exist, as we shall see below. Préfets have historically been rotated frequently, and have been given generous civil service compensation packages (which meant they are frequently on holiday in the towns), and have had little incentive to become heavily invested in local problem solving. The literature on land tenure in Burkina Faso, for example, frequently notes that préfets consistently have tried to evade responsibility for resolving disputes, preferring to encourage local customary authorities to assume responsibility that was in principle the préfets (Engberg-Pedersen, 1995; Gray, 2002; Mathieu, Zongo, & Paré, 2002). Typically, préfets had little

---

[2] Incidentally, when calculating the comparison cost with e-readers we have to remember that everyone is going to want an e-reader. So where 225 people use one library, those same 225 readers, plus maybe another 225 people who will pretend to be readers (who is going to refuse a free tablet?) will have to receive e-readers. So we are talking about 3.6 million in Burkina, or about 120 million across the continent. So at $30 for each e-reader tablet this is about $4.8 b and if we add the costs of renewal every 3 years, say, then we are basically at about the same expenditure. There is no free lunch, as we economists like to say, and e-readers of course have their place, but will not be somehow free to users.

training or interest in initiating or managing local development projects, and so rural areas saw little development. Préfets spent most of their working time supervising the provision of official documents for birth, marriage, divorce and death, and supervising the local administration of criminal justice.

In the absence of a real formal local development political authority, villages relied on informal or traditional political authorities. These traditional authorities varied considerably across the country. For the dominant Mossi ethnic group, for example, a well-established hierarchy of chiefs (*naba*) and traditional ministers exercised considerable power and legitimacy. For the acephalous Bwaba communities of southwestern Burkina Faso, traditional authority has been more fluid and ambiguous. A *chef de terre* (earth priest) and council of elders is usually presented as the local authority. But their jurisdictions are limited by tradition, and migrants who are of different ethnic groups may or may not acquiesce to their authority. Until recently, most of these traditional authorities have not been literate, and this has limited their ability to initiate and fully engage with development projects.

Since neither formal administration (préfet) nor traditional political authority (chef de terre) was in a position to supervise or meaningfully participate in management of a community library, FAVL turned in 2001 to a local committee when establishing the first community libraries. The préfet and traditional authorities were consulted, and readily agreed upon a group of 3-4 persons who would constitute a village committee. A document describing the management functions of the committee would be signed. While well intentioned, committee members gradually lost interest in the library. They had no budget authority and were not compensated for their time. Some committee members performed valuable civic engagement services, acting as volunteer library boosters. Some committee members never set foot in the library. In practice, the committees lapsed after a year, and only gathered when a FAVL representative visited the library.

In any case, in the mid-2000s Burkina Faso had completed a process of decentralization that began after the return to constitutional rule in 1991. The government decentralized urban areas, and large rural towns, with local elections for town councils and town mayors (Sebahara, 2012). The government then created rural communes that covered all villages of the country (Dafflon, Madiès, & Ky, 2012). Communes were to be responsible for village infrastructure (water, electricity, garbage disposal), land tenure, schools, local health services, and the administration of justice at the village level in addition to the civil registry work of the *prefecture* (Jacob et al., 2009). The government embarked on a large program to build new offices and rural council halls for local government.

Local elections were held in 2006 (Hilgers & Jacob, 2009; Ouedraogo, 2003). Two rural council members were elected from each village in a commune. The councilors then elected a mayor. The *Congrès pour la démocratie et le progrès* (CDP), the political party of then-President Blaise Compaoré, dominated the elections, winning 72% of the 17,786 councilors representing 357 communes. Communes were allocated reasonable budgets based on local tax revenues and allocations from the central government. A second round of elections was held in 2012, and in many localities new mayors replaced old mayors. Unfortunately, after the popular uprising of October 31, 2014, the

transitional military-civilian government suspended all rural councils and mayors, and replaced local administration with something they called *délégation spéciales*, presided over by the *préfets*. In effect, administration was handed over to the earlier civil service authorities rather than locally elected officials. As of this writing (August 2015), the transitional government has not announced whether or when local elections will be held, following the national presidential and legislative elections planned for October 11, 2015.

With rural councils and mayors in place after 2006, FAVL began a process of working with the communes to have rural community libraries be established, and to transfer authority over existing libraries to the commune. The commune is expected to carry out four broad management tasks, consonant with the library as a public library. First, the librarian salary has to be paid. Second, the librarian has to be supervised. Third, the building has to be secure and maintained. Fourth, reading programs have to be initiated and funded. The transfer of authority and agreement concerning management responsibility is called a "convention." FAVL agrees, in the convention, to work with the commune as a funding and technical partner.

Let me be forthright, and say that communes have been largely unsuccessful at three of the management tasks. None have been able to supervise the librarians. None have undertaken on their own initiative any maintenance or improvement to the library infrastructure. With only one exception, none have initiated or funded any reading program. From the point of view of these library tasks, the library may as well not even have existed for the commune.

On the salary front, the situation is better. FAVL asked that communes accept that librarians be considered as employees of the commune. FAVL offered to continue to pay the salary of the librarian but at a diminishing rate: 100% for the first year, 75% for the second year, 50% for the third year, 25% for the fourth year, and the commune would pay the full salary from the fifth year onwards.

The experience has been mixed. There are four cases (Commune name and number of libraries in parentheses):

1. Some communes accepted the convention agreement and have participated as full partners, including the payment of librarian salaries, and are now paying 100% of the librarian salaries. Even this group, however, have not actually signed contracts with the librarians. (Bereba, 2, Kiembara, 1, Koumbia, 1, Sara, 1, and Niankorodougou, 1)

2. Some communes signed the convention, paid salaries for a time, and then started not paying librarian salaries, even while FAVL continued to make transfers to the account of the commune. The mayor and accountant would justify the lack of payment saying the commune had cash flow problems. In some cases, they resumed payments, or made good faith payments. In other cases the commune stopped paying altogether. (Boni, 1, Belehede, 1, Pobe Mengao, 1, Ouargaye, 1)

3. Some communes displayed interest in signing the convention, but the mayor and secretary-general would find reasons for delay in signing. (Houndé, 2)

4. Some communes exhibited no interest on the part of the mayor and secretary general to assume any role in managing the library. This occurred in one village where the library was not located in the communal headquarters village. (Bougounam, 1)

For FAVL's current expansion plans to 21 communes in northern Burkina Faso, of which 20 are funded with a grant from Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and one funded through private donors, all of the communes have signed the conventions. However, four have indicated they do not have funds in their budget to support the first year payment of 25% of salary. Moreover, few of the prefets and *secrétaire général* of the commune have demonstrated much longer-term engagement. Community engagement, likewise, has not been much in evidence, despite repeated efforts by the FAVL team to create a "space" for such community engagement.

The number of libraries involved is small, so there is little basis for determining what factors explain why five communes are ready and willing to contribute to offer public library services while four others eventually lacked the administrative capacity or desire to support their library and two others are foot-dragging or refusing. The communes that do pay the salaries (Bereba, Koumbia, Kiembara, Sara and Niankorodougou) also tend to be more supportive of library programming, and have contributed to summer reading camps and other activities.

This breakdown seems to be similar to the "success ratio" of larger towns with libraries established by CENALAC in the 1990s. Many of these libraries are now effectively closed, or do little to serve library patrons. In the case of CENALAC libraries (known as CLAC, for *Centre de lecture et animation culturelle*), the salaries are paid for by the Ministry of Education, so the basic role for the commune is simply to ensure that the library is actually opened.

Supervising the librarian has turned out to be a very difficult task for communes in Burkina Faso. The libraries are not located next to the commune, and so commune officials rarely visit the libraries. The typical commune only has two or three employees, and so has little experience with managing employees. The problem is very similar to the issue of local management of schools, a problem that bedevils local government. There are many remedies suggested and some remedies have been evaluated with randomized control trials. A recent randomized experiment, for example, suggested that local governments could reduce absenteeism among teachers by using cameras to monitor presence and then tie financial incentives to attendance (Duflo, Hanna, & Ryan, 2012).

More generally, many might suggest that community participation could boost the efficacy of communes in managing libraries. Burkina Faso, with support from the government of Japan, piloted in 2009 a participatory approach called COGES (for *comité de gestion*) where a local school committee was supposed to manage the primary schools along with the elected officials of the commune and the school director and inspectorate. The pilot was judged a success (though there was no real evaluation), and in 2014 the approach was extended to all primary schools in the country. There have,

however, been few rigorous studies of the extent to which the COGES changed much in primary schools.[3]

The experience of other countries with community participation in local provision and management of public goods has not been reassuring. There is little evidence, however, that such participation, when initiated by an NGO or by government, affects project outcomes. This is particularly true for schooling, where there has been much discussion, and some research, on the issue (Afridi, Anderson, & Mundy, 2014; Dunne, Akyeampong, & Humphreys, 2007; Michener, 1998; Rose, 2003). The ineffectiveness of participation models has also been noted in other areas of local governance such as forestry management (Bouda, Savadogo, Tiveau, & Ouedraogo, 2011). Some large scale randomized control trials of various programs likewise cast doubt on the general utility of community participation. Banerjee, Banerji, Duflo, Glennerster, and Khemani (2010) and Casey, Glennerster, and Miguel (2012), for example, found that community participation programs yielded small and statistically insignificant results.

Commentators often overlook the possibility that local participation may be bad: ceding control over significant aspects of a project may provide an opening for diversion of outcomes, misappropriation, or even embezzlement. Local participation is often touted as exercising a sort of control mechanism: community members are going to continue to live in a community, so they are interested in positive outcomes. The fallacy in the argument is that project professionals are going to continue in their work, and may be even more interested in positive project outcomes. Efforts to elicit community participation are often costly in terms of management time. Finally, repeated failure to influence outcomes might be self-reinforcing as a vicious circle develops where the engaged citizens of a locality become disillusioned and so engagement becomes even costlier and less effective the next time it is attempted.

What should organizations like FAVL do to improve the situation? I would recommend three moderately expensive changes. First, library promotion organizations should insert budget lines for a *local government liaison*. This would be a full-time staff position, and the person would be charged with becoming an expert on local government, the point person in all of the library management efforts involving local government, and also with tracking and sharing data on local government and libraries. The ideal person for such a position would be someone with experience in local government. Second, once a year a two day retreat should be organized for the librarians in a region and the *secrétaire général* of their commune. In the retreat, issues of salary, contract, benefits and management might be openly discussed and experiences shared. Third, library support organizations must themselves set the example, with transparency and provision of information. A *monthly newsletter* delivered to local government officials and community leaders should be an essential and priority activity.

---

[3] An interesting recent study purports to find indirect evidence of the likely benefits from participation. Sawada et al. (2015) found the members of COGES school boards were more willing to contribute when playing a public goods game in an experimental setting. The authors interpreted the finding as suggesting that participation in COGES had increased social capital in the community, and thus would lead to better outcomes in terms of provision and management of local public goods.

National government

Across Africa, national library services and boards have been roundly criticized for poor leadership and stewardship of the mission to promote reading (LOR, 2015). In Burkina Faso, public libraries are supported by a division in the Ministry of Culture, awkwardly called the *Centre national de lecture et d'animation culturelle* (CENALAC, or National Center for Reading and Cultural promotion). CENALAC used to be a quasi-autonomous entity, supervising the 40 public libraries located in small towns throughout the country. There were allegations (including one investigation, apparently) of corruption at the senior level in the mid-2000s, and the CENALAC was placed under the aegis of a broader ministerial structure called the *Direction générale du livre et de la lecture publique* (DGLLP, or General Directorate of the Book and Public Reading). The DGLLP also took over supervision of the autonomous National Library of Burkina Faso, which at present (2015) remains dysfunctional, and whose only activity is to issue numbers for the *depôt légale* of works published in Burkina Faso.[4] The only reading promotion activity, apparently, carried out by the DGLLP over the past three years has been to organize in 2015 a kind of literary café where authors present their works to the public. The first café was held in April, a second in June 2015. There is little public accountability for the DGLLP, CENALAC and BNF, since there is little dissemination of reports or evaluation of their activities.

Looking back at the history of state library boards that were created after 1880 to support public libraries in the United States, it is clear that there are several activities that can be coordinated by the national government. A national library board needs to develop and shepherd through the legislature and executive library enabling legislation. Recommended book lists and suppliers need to be disseminated. Promoting and subsidizing technologies adapted to Africa's leapfrog into smartphones should be a priority for a library board.

First, the national government needs to pass what is known as "enabling legislation" that clarifies for localities (in Burkina Faso this would be communes) exactly how they can manage a public library. Library enabling legislation needs to "nudge" local government to consider a public library as a normal essential public service rather than an exotic luxury. For example, one innovation would be to include automatically in budgetary documents a presumption that the commune will hire a librarian. The line item for a librarian would be the same as that for an accountant and secretary, which almost every commune has. A standard salary schedule would be fixed for a librarian who works half time. A basic job description could be approved at the ministerial level.

Second, the national government needs to work with librarians to promulgate a standard book list of 500 books that are available in the country at reasonable cost.

---

[4] « Le Directeur de la communication et de la presse ministérielle (DCPM) du ministère de la Culture et du Tourisme nous a fait parvenir cette note : «Dans votre livraison n°29 du 10 mars 2013, à la page 11, répondant à la question n°2 posée par Mme Rose S., Bobo Dioulasso, vous affirmez que «le Burkina n'a plus de Bibliothèque nationale». Je voudrais préciser que le décret n°2012-913/PRES/PM/MCT/MFPTSS du 26 novembre 2012 supprime le statut d'EPE de la Bibliothèque nationale et du CENALAC, en raison des difficultés objectives qu'éprouvaient ces deux structures à assumer leur autonomie financière en tant qu'EPE. Elles sont désormais des Directions centrales relevant de la Direction générale du livre et de la lecture publique (DGLLP), tout en conservant leur mission, leur personnel et leur patrimoine. Du reste, la Bibliothèque nationale attend l'achèvement de son siège en chantier à Ouaga 2000, pour y aménager dans quelques mois. Sur ce, je vous prie de bien vouloir rassurer Mme Rose S. et l'ensemble de vos lecteurs, que le Burkina a toujours sa Bibliothèque nationale. » http://www.courrierconfidentiel.net/index.php/articles-gratuits/450-question-reponse-003

Creating book lists is often controversial, and there are some rules of thumb that can enable a book list to be done effectively (Maack, 2001). One is to be clear that the list does not impede localities from providing more books than those included in the list. Indeed, 500 books would be small, and a typical village library might have 1500 books. So the government does not have to decide whether the Bible and the Quran and the Book of Mormon should be on the list, instead it can simply concentrate on non-religious books. Concentrating on fiction, biography, local languages and popular history (as opposed to expensive and little needed works of history intended for academic audiences), and letting local communities decide about more expensive reference and non-fiction is another possibility. Most African countries have only a few hundred works of fiction, popular history and biography, so hard choices do not have to be made. Limiting the book list further by only including works by African authors is a reasonable strategy: there is no need to try to triage 100 books from the entire literary production of the world over the past several hundred years.

Third, the national government can take the lead in standardizing the book management tools that rural libraries need. Since most villages are not electrified, a major challenge is to use robust barcode scanners and smart phones that can transmit small packets of data to a central server to manage book registries, inventories, check outs, and late books. One might anticipate that about $300 of equipment would be needed for a library. The market for this equipment will not develop unless governments commit in advance. Of course, with equipment like this, customized and novel, there is considerable scope for corruption through kickbacks for the contract selected. Non-profit technology purveyors need to participate in the process.

Relatedly, library associations are important institutional mechanisms to ensure that national governments draft and update effective enabling legislation, develop and maintain recommended book lists, and proceed with the process of providing library collection management hardware and software tools. At present library associations in most African countries are oriented towards professional and academic librarians, rather than libraries for the reading public. There have been some initiatives to strengthen library associations but much remains to be done (Bradley, 2010).

Donor partners
The public library movement has little funding, and for the foreseeable future will rely on grants from donors. FAVL has partnered with several donor organizations for activities in Burkina Faso. These include Friends of Burkina Faso, New Field Foundation, EIFL, Osu Children's Library Fund, Rotary International and Rotary clubs, and most recently Catholic Relief Services (in turn contracting from USDA). FAVL has also partnered with other donor organizations for reading programs in Uganda and Ghana (Chen Yet-Sen Foundation, Under the Reading Tree, EIFL, and BookAid International). More broadly, FAVL and other library support organizations have participated in a network, Beyond Access, funded by the Gates Foundation.

Large donor organizations, whether government or non-profit, have a logic of their own. They have a focus on accountability and compulsion to prevent embezzlement, they appreciate regular reporting of activities, and they value publicity that promotes their giving as effective. But all three of these activities are challenging for library support organizations that are often not funded to carry out these activities.

Accounting is difficult for many library support organization whose mission is to facilitate interaction with readers. FAVL has endeavored to be very transparent in its finances, using Quickbooks for non-profits to record every financial transaction, and making regular reports of financial transactions available to the public. We knew we had insufficient internal controls that are needed to prevent fraud. Nevertheless, the realization did not prepare us for the enormous paperwork associated our sub-contract on a large grant from U.S.D.A. administered by CRS.   For example, it had been our practice to withdraw funds from the bank into a petty cash fund and then use the petty cash for the myriad expenses of the month. Under CRS internal controls, every expense planned must be first submitted to the accountant, who then issues a check, which then is taken to the bank to cash, then the expense is carried out, and then the remainder is redeposited into the bank account. Since FAVL carries out multiple transactions, this means that sometimes there are a dozen trips to the bank each week. Moreover, forms are filled and stamped for multiple stages of the transaction. While the sub-contract provided for a full-time accountant, the paperwork and transaction time required of other staff members turned out to be substantial; perhaps 10% of their time is spent simply filling out financial paperwork.   In the long-run, moving to a much more rigorous procedure for internal control is probably a good step. Nonetheless, it often feels like procedures that have been developed for an enormous global organization that probably takes a large overhead of each grant is being imposed on the small organization without regard to relevance or efficacy.

Another important dimension to partnering with donors is learning about the effectiveness of the project. In order to learn, some element of random selection is crucial. While donors have a strong interest in publicizing their support as effective, the broader development agenda and community would be well-served if donors were willing to frame projects as likely to not succeed, and an important goal of a project is to learn about what works. While qualitative, in-depth, anthropological-style investigations are important, with focus groups and interviews, there is also important information to be gleaned from comparing outcomes for properly selected treatment and control groups, or what is currently called A/B testing.

For example, the current project FAVL is undertaking with CRS could have been imagined differently, as an experiment in different kinds of community control over the community library. Currently, all libraries are being established under the aegis of the commune. But one might have imagined selecting ten of the communities and instead partnering with a local non-governmental organization. Then a comparison could be made between working with the commune and working with a local NGO. While the sample size would be very small, the piloting of such an experience might then enable a larger scale experiment.

Conclusion
This paper has leveraged the experiences of FAVL in establishing and supporting community libraries in rural Burkina Faso to serve as a lens for focusing on where partnerships can be improved. There is little hope for realizing the ambitions of the public library movement in Africa if partners do not act quickly and intelligently. Policymakers and decision makers like bullet points, so here they are:

- When partnering with local government:
  - Fund a position for a full-time local government liaison.
  - Include in budget provision for annual retreat.
  - Ensure dissemination of a monthly newsletter.
- National governments need to coordinate and standardize:
  - Enabling legislation that will facilitate communes in hiring and supervising librarians.
  - Recommended 500 book lists for community libraries that are regularly updated.
  - Solar-powered tools for managing book checkouts and inventory.
- Donor agencies need to plan for:
  - Simplified accounting procedures for library implementation partners.
  - Opportunities for randomization that will enable learning.

References

Afridi, Momina, Anderson, Stephen, & Mundy, Karen. (2014). Rapid Review of the Knowledge Base Parental and Community Participation in School Governance.

Banerjee, Abhijit V, Banerji, Rukmini, Duflo, Esther, Glennerster, Rachel, & Khemani, Stuti. (2010). Pitfalls of Participatory Programs: Evidence from a randomized evaluation in education in India. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 1-30.

Bouda, Henri-Noël, Savadogo, Patrice, Tiveau, Daniel, & Ouedraogo, Boureima. (2011). State, forest and community: challenges of democratically decentralizing forest management in the Centre-West Region of Burkina Faso. *Sustainable Development, 19*(4), 275-288.

Bradley, Fiona. (2010). Building capacity through the IFLA Building Strong Library Associations programme. *IFLA journal, 36*(4), 332-334.

Casey, Katherine, Glennerster, Rachel, & Miguel, Edward. (2012). Reshaping Institutions: Evidence and Aid Impacts Using a Preanalysis Plan. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 1755*, 1812.

Dafflon, Bernard, Madiès, Thierry, & Ky, Abraham. (2012). Local Public Finance of Territorial Collectivities in Burkina Faso. In B. D. a. T. Madies (Ed.), *The Political Economy of Decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Implementation Model in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, and Senegal* (pp. 47-106).

Dent, Valeda Frances, Goodman, Geoff, & Kevane, Michael. (2014). *Rural Community Libraries in Africa: Challenges and Impacts*: IGI Global.

Duflo, Esther, Hanna, Rema, & Ryan, Stephen P. (2012). Incentives work: Getting teachers to come to school. *The American Economic Review*, 1241-1278.

Dunne, Máiréad, Akyeampong, Kwame, & Humphreys, Sara. (2007). *School Processes, Local Governance and Community Participation: Understanding Access. Create Pathways to Access. Research Monograph No. 6*: ERIC.

Elbert, Monika, Fuegi, David, & Lipeikaite, Ugne. (2012). Public libraries in Africa–agents for development and innovation? Current perceptions of local stakeholders. *IFLA journal, 38*(2), 148-165.

Engberg-Pedersen, L. (1995). Creating local democratic politics from above: the'Gestion des Terroirs' approach in Burkina Faso. *Issue Paper-Dryland Programme, International Institute for Environment and Development (United Kingdom)*.

Forsyth, Ellen. (2005). Public libraries and the millennium development goals. *IFLA journal, 31*(4), 315-323.

Gray, Leslie C. (2002). Environmental policy, land rights, and conflict: rethinking community natural resource management programs in Burkina Faso. *Environment and Planning D, 20*(2), 167-182.

Hilgers, Mathieu, & Jacob, Jean-Pierre. (2009). *Anthropologie de la candidature électorale au Burkina Faso* (Vol. 228): De Boeck Supérieur.

Issak, Aissa. (2000). *Public libraries in Africa : a report and annotated bibliography*. Oxford, U.K.: International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP).

Jacob, Jean-Pierre, Hochet, Peter, Cheron, Hélène, Diawara, Mahamadou, Héma, Issouf, Konseiga, Romaine, & Médah, Rachel. (2009). L'action publique dans la commune de Réo (Sanguié, Burkina Faso).

LOR, Peter Johan. (2015). Who was to blame? The genealogy of the "Anglo-American" national library service model.

Maack, Mary Niles. (2001). Books and libraries as instruments of cultural diplomacy in Francophone Africa during the Cold War. *Libraries & Culture, 36*(1), 58-86.

Mathieu, Paul, Zongo, Mahamadou, & Paré, Lacinan. (2002). Monetary land transactions in Western Burkina Faso: commoditisation, papers and ambiguities. *The European Journal of Development Research, 14*(2), 109-128.

Michener, Victoria J. (1998). The participatory approach: contradiction and co-option in Burkina Faso. *World development, 26*(12), 2105-2118.

Ojiambo, Joseph B, & Kasalu, Judy S. (2015). Development of Libraries in Kenya and Their Role in Economic Development.

Ouedraogo, Hubert MG. (2003). Decentralisation and local governance: Experiences from francophone West Africa. *Public administration and development, 23*(1), 97-103.

Rose, Pauline. (2003). Communities, gender and education: Evidence from sub-Saharan Africa. *background paper for the EFA Global Monitoring Report, 4*, 7.

Sebahara, Pamphile. (2012). La construction des institutions municipales au Burkina Faso: enjeux, contraintes et potentialités. *Bulletin de l'APAD*(34-36).

Stranger-Johannessen, Espen, Asselin, Marlene, & Doiron, Ray. (2015). New perspectives on community library development in Africa. *New Library World, 116*(1/2), 79-93.