**Breaking through perceptual boundaries: the essential contribution of library services for children and youth to national development of low-income countries**

Jane Kinney Meyers

President, Lubuto Library Project

INTRODUCTION

Public-access libraries can transform the educational landscape of the whole society in countries with weak information and educational infrastructure.  Lubuto Libraries, as an example, fill a critical institutional gap, as a highly effective way to serve marginalized and out-of-school children and youth (OVCY).This outcome is consistent with social imperatives and national priorities of most African countries with overwhelmingly young demographics.

Yet international development efforts to strengthen educational systems, improve literacy, serve out-of-school children and other major program initiatives intended to support the development goals of low-income countries generally overlook the role of libraries.

Even worse, development agencies have come to think of book and computer donation programs as creating “libraries,” and their lack of impact has taken real libraries further from consideration by development planners and funders. African library professionals recognize that these practices have impeded development of the profession, but often have not had a strong voice in preventing them and advocating for support of what is genuinely needed. It is up to the library profession to show their measureable impact in helping countries achieve development priorities and their Millenium Development Goals.

Effectively serving OVCY requires professional library services, drawing on a range of technologies and creating innovative programming, that benefit the entire society – not just vulnerable youth. By facilitating equitable access to marginalized populations, addressing barriers to information and learning, reconnecting a young society with its languages and cultural and literary traditions, and approaching poverty alleviation by empowering all people in society, libraries can play a powerful role in national development.

This paper describes the specific policy concerns and development objectives in Zambia and how the Lubuto Library Project is addressing through an integrated framework and in partnership with the national government and professional library community of Zambia.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT AND POLICY IMPERATIVES**

The Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) has made noteworthy progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015, and its commitment has been demonstrated through increased budget allocation to the education and skills sector in the last five years. Since 2002, when the GRZ announced the Free Basic Education Policy, access to education has significantly expanded. However, inequities in the education system persist and the overall quality of education remains inadequate to prepare young people for productive and fulfilling lives. The urgency of the situation is clear: lack of equity and quality in education undermines overall development in Zambia.

These three crucial elements in education – access, quality, and equity– are inextricably linked, and are all necessary if improved educational outcomes are to be attained. Access is an important first step; there is a human rights imperative for all people to have the opportunity to develop their capacities and to participate fully in society. However, access to poor quality education is of little value. Only high quality education empowers individuals, gives them voice, unlocks their potential, and opens doors to them for the rest of their lives. Equity ensures that access to and the benefits of lifelong learning are shared by all members of society.

***Quality*** education ensures that individuals gain the expected skills, knowledge, attitudes and values to enable them contribute effectively to the country’s development. Zambia has been successful in improving access to education, but this substantial and rapid increase in enrolment has made it difficult to improve or even maintain the quality of education. As a result, many children leave the basic education system lacking essential literacy, numeracy and cognitive skills, and Zambia rates poorly in comparison to neighbouring countries. In a recent continent-wide comparison done by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), Zambian children had the second lowest average scores in both reading and math, with only neighbouring Malawi scoring worse.[[1]](#footnote-2)

***Equity*** in the educational context does not suggest that all individualshave equal knowledge, skills or abilities. Rather, equity refers to the fairness of the system and its ability to provide equal opportunities to all. When opportunity is not distributed fairly, there will inevitably be an underutilisation of talent. Those that are disadvantaged due to socio-economic status, gender, age or geography, for example, will not develop their skills and abilities, with consequent loss not only to them but to the country as a whole. Moreover, educational inequities reinforce and perpetuate economic inequality, which threatens social cohesion by generating unrest and disillusionment.

In Zambia, some of the most disadvantaged groups are those in rural areas, as well as girls, orphans and vulnerable children, children affected by HIV/AIDS and children with special educational needs. High average rates of school enrolment conceal significant disparities; for example, the enrolment rate in Eastern Province is 30% lower than in more heavily populated Copperbelt and Central Provinces. Enrolment rates are higher in the highest wealth quintiles and the wealthiest regions, while dropout rates are highest among poor children. Though gender parity has been nearly achieved at the basic education level, only a minority of girls complete secondary school and or go on to tertiary education or vocational training. More general age-related inequities also exist. As children get older, they are less likely to remain in the education system, with only 25% progressing to Grade 9.[[2]](#footnote-3) As Luyando Mutale Katenda, a 13-year-old UNICEF Child Ambassador from Lusaka, very succinctly put it, “In [the education] sector in Zambia it appears some children are more important than others.”[[3]](#footnote-4)

Compounding this, the impact of HIV/AIDS on Zambia’s education sector has been devastating. The influx of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in Zambia’s education sector places additional strain on an already over-burdened school system. OVC often come to school needing additional services and support such as food and emotional counselling. OVC are at a high risk of dropping out of school and double orphans (children whose father and mother are deceased) are less likely to go to school in the first place.

Quality and equity issues can be traced back to several key factors:

* ***Inadequate learning environments and materials:*** A stimulating and friendly learning environment, and the quality and availability of learning materials (which includes far more than just textbooks) have a positive impact on children’s participation and learning achievement. Unfortunately, in Zambia, many children – particularly those that are poor or out-of-school – are educated in crowded, unwelcoming classrooms and have little access to quality materials. Efforts such as stand-alone book and computer donation programs are too often unsustainable or offer irrelevant or outdated materials in unaccommodating spaces.
* ***A narrow approach to educational service provision:*** Learning does not take place in a vacuum, nor does it only occur in the classroom. Most educational programming in Zambia does not take a holistic approach or adequately take into account the whole range of needs that must be met in order for children to learn. At the same time, most approaches to connecting with disadvantaged youth, such as sports and vocational training, do not provide positive spaces for interaction or educational programs that take their abilities and interests into account.
* ***Insufficient capacity of teachers and communities:*** Teachers and communities often do not know how to provide – or understand the importance of – truly inclusive education. They lack the training and knowledge to identify vulnerabilities and to refer children, families, educators and staff to the support they require. They also tend to have limited awareness of support services that are available and when and how to connect vulnerable youth with them. They must be sensitised to addressing the needs of all children, with special attention to those who do not attend school. They must learn a child-centred approach that embraces children’s rights and, with community involvement, takes a holistic approach to children’s needs, creating a safe, secure and stimulating environment that is caring and supportive of children’s well-being.

It was in response to these issues and identified needs that the Lubuto model was developed, creating opportunities for equitable, high quality education and poverty reduction through open-access libraries and holistic educational, cultural and community programs.

**THE LUBUTO MODEL**

Lubuto Libraries are indigenously-styled facilities with a comprehensive, balanced collection of professionally selected books. These libraries serve as safe havens for vulnerable children and youth and are a platform for integrated programs, which offer discovery and learning through reading, music, art, drama, computers and other activities. Quality educational opportunities are further enhanced by psychosocial support programs of motivational mentoring and counselling, and Lubuto’s flexible model supports health, environmental and other targeted programming as well. By fostering literacy, language skills, awareness and respect of cultural heritage, general knowledge of the world, enjoyment of books and learning, and a sense of self-worth among children, Lubuto Libraries improve educational outcomes for all those that use them.

The Lubuto model has five key components:

***Working with government to identify target communities and host organisations:*** Lubuto Libraries are always established in partnership with local hosts (such as schools or community-based organisations) in locations that are selected in close consultation with national and local officials. This ensures that the targeting of users and library sites aligns with the larger context of identified needs, priorities and policies, while sustainability is built in through long-term ownership by the host institutions and national authorities.

***Planning and construction of enduring public facilities based on traditional architecture:*** Each Lubuto Library is designed to reflect indigenous culture, enhance pride and self-esteem of its users, and to provide maximum functionality and sustainability. The comfortable, welcoming and inspiring environments create a place where young people feel at home and connected to their roots, and are intrinsic to the experience and impact of library programs on individual users.

***Providing high quality, balanced collections and reading programs:*** Lubuto Libraries are not a book donation program; they feature comprehensive, balanced library collections of expertly selected and organised children's books. With the guidance of professional children’s librarians, materials are acquired and cataloged in the U.S. and shipped as a shelf-ready collection, organised according to a unique, accessible classification system. Local language materials are then identified and added in Zambia, and new materials keep the libraries “alive”. Because Lubuto Libraries emphasise respect for all library users and promote quality education, only the best books are included in their collections. The books are complemented by content on the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) laptops, including mother-tongue reading instruction created by Lubuto, together allowing children to develop and improve reading skills in Zambian languages and English, learn a broad range of subjects, and write their own stories.

***Establishing effective educational programs and social support services:*** Lubuto Libraries offer holistic programs in which young people and adults from every level of society can participate. Significantly, they provide a setting in which girls can be fully integrated in a way that does not deny opportunities for boys. Visitors are drawn to the library by engaging and relevant programs designed especially for the most vulnerable children and youth. Reading is the core program of Lubuto Libraries and is critical for acquiring, maintaining and improving literacy. Reading aloud and storytelling is conducted daily, and teachers are encouraged to bring classes to the library for read-aloud sessions. Library users not only learn from books on all subjects but also have many options for self-expression and developing their talents and skills through programming (described later in this presentation).

***Building community capacity:*** Training and guidance empower local staff, teachers and community volunteers to deliver quality educational services and support, innovate to meet local needs, manage resources and facilities, and monitor results and impact. The training model includes continuous professional development of library staff by expert volunteers and short-term specialised training based on their specific needs. Library staff are trained in working with vulnerable children and adolescents through outreach and by offering targeted educational support in the libraries. Lubuto staff train community volunteers to offer the library’s various programs. Lubuto provides the systems and training for staff to collect data on library use and impact, and compiles data on all library users, collections and programs.

At this critical juncture, robust evaluation of the model and its programs, and measurement of its impact, is needed so that decision-makers in Zambia and internationally understand the return on investment in Lubuto Libraries. With grant funding from the Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (OSISA) Lubuto is currently undertaking a one-year evaluation designed to build the evidence base and advocate for innovative, sustainable and effective strategies for ensuring access to high quality educational services and support to marginalized and vulnerable children and youth. The project focuses on documenting, assessing and sharing the outcomes and impact of the Lubuto Library model, ultimately benefitting children and youth in Zambia and beyond.

**PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ZAMBIA LIBRARY SERVICE (ZLS)**

The Lubuto model’s full range of preservation, reading promotion, educational and social service activities demonstrate the valuable role libraries can play in national development. The first Lubuto Libraries in Zambia have been embraced by the country’s education stakeholders and the Ministry of Education, Science and Vocational Training (MOESVT) is committed to supporting expansion of the model to each province, in partnership with the Zambia Library Service.

The program will work in six provinces in Zambia: Eastern, Luapula, Northern, North-Western, Southern and Western. Lubuto Libraries will be built directly adjacent to the provincial ZLS libraries, and operated in close collaboration with ZLS. Recognizing the effectiveness of the Lubuto model in contributing to achievement of MOESVT and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) objectives, this approach was proposed by ZLS. It will extend ZLS services to Zambia’s majority population of children and youth that it is currently unequipped to serve, improving educational quality and access for that demographic.

Partnership is fundamental to the Lubuto model and it is through a unique collaborative effort that the planned expansion was conceptualised and developed. The implementation of the program will be a joint effort between the Lubuto Library Project (LLP) and Zambia’s Ministry of Education, Science and Vocational Training (MOESVT). The Zambia Library Service*,* as a department of the MOESVT, manages the public library network throughout Zambia and plays a vital role in the provision of education in the country. In addition to ensuring the establishment and co-ordination of libraries, ZLS is responsible for assisting other organisations providing library and information services.

This initiative draws strength from the shared aims and long history of collaboration between the partners. LLP’s priorities and plans have been closely coordinated with the library community in Zambia and the MOESVT since inception, with Government possessing ultimate “ownership” of Lubuto Libraries. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between LLP and the Ministry was signed in 2008, naming LLP as a national partner in providing literacy and library services to Zambia’s orphans and vulnerable children. This MOU complements national plans to ensure equitable access to educational resources and mandates LLP to “provide leadership in establishing standards of good library practice” in order to improve the quality of education in Zambia. The direct relationship between ZLS and LLP was formalized in a meeting of officials of both organisations at ZLS in June 2011. A new MOU now outlines specific responsibilities of MOEVST and LLP in national scale-up and integration of the Lubuto Library model into ZLS library services.

 In a joint initiative to establish and sustain Lubuto Libraries as part of ZLS provincial libraries, MOEVST (ZLS) and LLP will plan integration of the two library services in a complementary way that clarifies the scope of each library to effectively serve their respective user groups.  LLP is a technical partner of MOEVST in these activities but the physical structures and property of the libraries (including the book collections, computers and materials of all media) are owned by MOEVST and managed by ZLS.The ZLS provincial libraries will primarily exist to serve adults and institutions in Zambian society; the Lubuto Libraries’ purpose is to serve children and youth.  As a technical partner, LLP will assist in architectural designs to enhance usability of ZLS facilities and in establishing ICT facilities for public access computers in ZLS libraries in coordination with child-appropriate ICT use in Lubuto Libraries.  The scope of book collections will likewise reflect the different user groups of each library and as Lubuto Libraries are integrated with ZLS libraries, those portions of ZLS book collections geared to children will be transferred to the Lubuto facilities, reclassified and integrated into LLP’s child-friendly organisation system.

LLP will work in close partnership with ZLS in planning, management and Lubuto Library system and policy incorporation into the existing ZLS library policy. New service and collection policies will thus need the complete approval of ZLS management and require joint development by ZLS and LLP.  LLP will assist ZLS with stakeholder advocacy with a goal of obtaining development funding and ongoing direct financial support for the ZLS-Lubuto libraries.  Additionally, LLP cooperates with other key Ministry bodies including the University of Zambia, Copperbelt University, technical, educational and vocational colleges thereby enhancing the network of competent accredited library education support structures.

Finally, LLP collaborates with the Zambian Board on Books for Young People, the Zambia Library Association, Government and other stakeholders in preserving and documenting indigenous literature, cultural history and knowledge.  Having created an initial digital archive of Zambian materials found in the U.S. Library of Congress, LLP will continue to work with ZLS to identify and digitize out-of-print Zambian literature to add to the LubutoCollections.org digital archive and endeavour to have selected works reprinted by Government or commercial publishers.  LLP will work with ZLS to build their capacity to sustain and continue the preservation and digitization programme and to engage library users and communities in creation of new materials in various media that preserve oral traditions.

**OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS**

In the Education Bill of 2011, the government is mandated not only to ensure equal access to quality education but to establish mechanisms for “identifying poor and vulnerable children, assessing their needs and determining how best to meet their educational needs.” The overall objective of this program is to support the Ministry of Education, Science and Vocational Training to ensure high quality education for all children in Zambia, including the most vulnerable.

This initiative reflects the need for civil society to join efforts with Government in order to achieve mutual goals. Civil society has specialised expertise to contribute, which can complement that of the government. LLP and ZLS have identified a concrete opportunity to demonstrate how partnership between state and non-state actors can lead to tangible results for Zambia. The specific objective of the program is therefore to deliver accessible, high quality educational services to children and youth through Lubuto Libraries. In order to achieve this objective, activities have been designed to achieve three key results:

***Result 1:* Open access to child-friendly, culture-specific and well-equipped learning environments is provided.**

The physical environment has a significant influence on learning. It gives children clear messages about how *they* are valued and how *learning* is valued. When purposefully planned and built, equipped, it can be supportive of both collaborative and independent learning. The environment also includes the creative interaction that happens within it. The indigenous building styles of the proposed Lubuto Libraries will therefore provide comfortable and welcoming spaces for children and youth, and the common spaces and cultural reflection will encourage intergenerational interaction. The child-friendly scale and design of the Lubuto library additions to ZLS’s provincial services will clearly signal ZLS’s intent to serve the predominant Zambian demographic of children and youth.

***Result 2:*** **Holistic development and empowerment of children and youth is supported.**

Lubuto Libraries embrace the idea that education must lie within a holistic framework that takes into full account the many and varied needs of children, young people and their communities. For this reason, integrated programming is intrinsic to the Lubuto model. At all libraries, a wide range of programs – specifically developed to be relevant to the context – are offered, proactive outreach efforts are carried out, and vulnerable children are linked to other services and support as needed.

***Result 3:* Capacity of communities and educators to provide quality services and support to children and youth is increased.**

One of the key lessons from Lubuto’s experience is that, given opportunity and capacity support, people and communities can champion their own development. Increased capacity not only promotes quality education, it fosters sustainability and ownership. Lubuto Libraries offer training and support to library staff, volunteers, and teachers, while raising overall awareness within the community.

**ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE RESULTS**

The planned activities that will achieve the results that will meet Government objectives draw on LLP’s experience with establishing its first two libraries in Lusaka, Zambia.

***Result 1: Open access to child-friendly, culture-specific and well-equipped learning environments is provided.***

***Activity 1.1:*** *Construct and maintain Lubuto Libraries in 6 provinces based on traditional architecture*

The design of the 3-building Lubuto library compounds will be specially adapted on the site of each ZLS provincial library to enhance use and aesthetics of the existing ZLS facilities. In each community, consultations will be carried out before and during construction to gather input on their needs and develop the most appropriate architectural plans. LLP will work with the MOESVT Infrastructure Section to develop plans. Local craftsmen, sources of labour and materials will be identified and used wherever possible.

***Activity 1.2:*** *Prepare, deliver and maintain comprehensive library collections for Lubuto Libraries in 6 provinces*

LLP will create an initial 4,000-volume collection, professionally catalogued in the LLP union catalogue using Follet’s Destiny system and classified according to the Lubuto Classification System. Updates to the collections will be provided regularly and periodic inventories of the collection and comparison with the online catalogue will be made. Development of LLP’s online union catalogue will be coordinated with library automation efforts of the ZLS and other libraries in Zambia. Likewise, all collection development activities of Lubuto Libraries will complement and support other national efforts.

***Activity 1.3:*** *Source and procure Zambian language and other local materials*

Zambian language books and other locally-acquired materials will be catalogued and added to the initial collection in-country. LLP will provide (and include in the LLP system) original cataloguing data for MOESVT Primary Reading Programme materials and other curriculum support materials in all Zambian languages. The catalog will thus become a valuable tool to libraries and schools nationwide.

***Activity 1.4:*** *Identify and preserve oral culture and other local materials*

This activity will build on ongoing work with the Zambian Board on Books for Young People (ZBBY), an organisation LLP was instrumental in establishing. Currently, LLP staff work to promote the creation of local materials through author/illustrator workshops, bookmaking workshops, preservation activities, and guiding Lubuto*Arts* participants to create wordless books and illustrations to traditional stories. LLP volunteers identify and digitise Zambian stories long out of print but preserved in libraries worldwide and created the www.LubutoCollections.org website as a repository for these books to reach a new generation of readers and encourage adaptation of the stories to new picture books, radio plays and other uses. The digital archive will grow as more books are identified and scanned. Through storytelling events, video production of Lubuto Storytime, and other means of capturing and preserving oral culture, Lubuto Library staff will be engaged in preservation of traditional stories in Zambia languages. Such activities and accomplishments will be constantly encouraged and recognised in Lubuto Libraries and their surrounding communities.

***Activity 1.5:*** *Identify/mobilise communities to host new libraries within provincial clusters*

LLP receives requests on a regular basis from communities throughout Zambia who wish to host Lubuto Libraries. It is expected that with the establishment of these new libraries in 6 provinces, which will be highly visible models of quality services, such requests will increase dramatically. LLP will review those requests with MOESVT, along with demographic data and already identified MOESVT priorities, to determine appropriate sites for other provincial cluster libraries. Following LLP’s standard practice, the responsibilities of the host communities and LLP will be explicitly detailed in a Memorandum of Understanding with host organisations and provide a clear guideline for assessing host capacity. Community meetings focused on the benefits and mutual responsibilities of hosting Lubuto Libraries have shown to be a highly effective mobilising activity.

***Activity 1.6:*** *Mobilise resources for establishing libraries within provincial clusters*

LLP’s ongoing resource mobilisation efforts with the private sector, foundations, national and international donors, and other potential sponsors will be greatly strengthened by MOESVT support and ZLS partnership. Potential donors with Zambia’s national interests in mind want assurances that Lubuto Libraries align with national educational policies and priorities and that this is a model that the Ministry of Education, Science and Vocational Training approves and supports. Leveraging these additional resources will allow the initial libraries to grow more rapidly into clusters of libraries, maximising the impact and penetration of the MOESVT’s investment.

***Result 2:******Holistic development and empowerment of children and youth is supported.***

***Activity 2.1:*** *Identify community members to lead/participate in library programs*

Lubuto Libraries are established in extensive consultation with their community-based host organisations, including boards and other bodies related to their functioning within the community. Presentations on the libraries’ programs and services emphasise the community’s role and opportunities for community members to contribute their talents and interests to the libraries’ programming. It has been through these means, and publicity of the upcoming library, that individuals desirous of contributing to the library and offering programs have been identified for existing Lubuto Libraries. LLP’s close relationships with the National Arts Council of Zambia, the Zambia Board on Books for Young People, and the Zambia Library Association, as well as active networking among the professional community in Zambia, has led to development of the rich programs of Lubuto Libraries. Community members are inspired by the programs and often enthusiastic to participate in and lead programs themselves. Thus, identification of new programs and their leaders and participants happens on all LLP levels: as a natural outgrowth of ongoing community-user interaction in the libraries (by library staff and trainers); by Provincial Managers; and by LLP staff.

***Activity 2.2:*** *Establish and run core Lubuto Library programs*

Lubuto Libraries offer far more than their excellent collections of books; they offer programs that consider the whole child or youth, dramatically raising the quality of their learning. All Lubuto Library programming has been developed through partnerships that focus Zambian professional expertise and talents on its youth and future generations.

The following programs are offered at each Lubuto Library:

**Lubuto*Storytime***: Reading and read-aloud sessions, essential components literacy development, are carried out daily by library staff, teachers, regular volunteers and library visitors, as well as by and among the children themselves.

**Lubuto*Mentoring*** is an innovative program that addresses the psychosocial support and life skills training needs of vulnerable youth by teaching values and offering counselling and mentoring in Lubuto Libraries. Sessions conducted in Zambian languages combine group discussion with storytelling, a traditional way that values are passed down through generations, directly connecting children to their roots and society. The program is built on the principles of gender equity, utilizing existing resources, and replicating best practices. Using the dual approach of direct intervention and community-level capacity building, Lubuto*Mentoring* creates a sustainable, needs-driven platform for reaching marginalised young people.

**Lubuto*Arts*** is a self-sustaining visual art training program designed and taught by prominent Zambian artists and supported by proceeds of the sale of artworks. The visual arts serve as a means of communication and self-expression for young people. Participants develop their talents and have exhibited and sold their artwork in Zambia and internationally.

**Lubuto*Drama*:** Lubuto Libraries offer a twice-weekly performing arts program of drama, improvisation, and adapting books and stories for performance. Of the important role Lubuto*Drama* plays in children’s lives, actor and Lubuto supporter Danny Glover noted that it “reinforces their sense of themselves and re-establishes a different confidence in them. [L]ike my own experiences in acting when I was young, it sets something in motion … a way to organise the emotional life within you. To watch these young people engaging in that and claiming it for themselves is very special.”

**Lubuto*Laptops*:** A popular Lubuto Library program since February 2009, the innovative One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) XO laptops are heavily used, primarily by children writing about their lives and improving language and computer skills.

**Lubuto*Literacy*:** Children learn to read most effectively when they are taught in their mother tongues. LLP developed a program to respond to the literacy needs of the out-of-school children it serves, inspired by a call for proposals from the EIFL Public Library Innovation Program (PLIP), intended to encourage innovative applications of information technology in public libraries. EIFL, Electronic Information for Libraries, is an independent, not-for-profit organization based in Rome, Italy.

In partnership with the Ministry of Education (predecessor to MOESVT), Zambian teachers adapted reading lessons from the Government curriculum in the seven major Zambian languages and talented youth of Lubuto libraries created 100 computer-based reading lessons in each language – 700 lessons in total. The open-source lessons were created on Lubuto’s OLPC laptops but can run on any computer platform and will be available to all to download from www.LubutoCollections.org. Through Lubuto*Literacy*, Lubuto Libraries actually teach children to read, an exceptional innovation in library services. Lubuto*Literacy* extends the government reading curriculum beyond the classroom. LLP will determine with MOESVT the most practical distribution method to schools and other educational institutions in the coming years, a plan that will evolve as ICT infrastructure strengthens throughout the nation.

***Activity 2.3:*** *Develop and run new programs and special programs based on community needs and interests*

Several new programs are being developed for Lubuto Libraries. In addition to the following, Lubuto staff will be trained to identify local needs and resources for the development of new programs on an ongoing basis.

 **Lubuto*Health*:** This health and HIV program is being developed through LLP’s partnership with PCI, an international health NGO. While young children and adolescents have been a challenging target population for health services and in particular sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, Lubuto Libraries provide an important point of contact and means of disseminating health materials, information and programming. Lubuto Library collections include materials on all levels on health in general, medicine, the human body and health information on subjects of special importance to users of Lubuto Libraries. Using their participatory approach PCI will develop Lubuto*Health* programming in sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections and other common health related areas such as personal and environmental hygiene including, hand washing, malaria prevention and treatment, diarrheal diseases, and prevention of common accidents. The program will re-enforce behaviors by making young people practice what is being taught, e.g. developing and using simple hand washing facilities made out of available community resources, using available toilets/pit latrines, drinking clean water etc. As with the Lubuto*Mentoring* program, caregivers will also participate in this program and receive training in health promotion, treatment, care and support, to further reinforce children’s behavior changes.

**Lubuto*Littleones*:** Responding to national and international recognition of the critical role early childhood education plays in the intellectual and emotional development of all people, LLP is formalizing its services to very young children and their mothers. Like all Lubuto programs, development of Lubuto*Littleones* will be based on traditional games, songs and stories from Zambia’s various cultures. The program will aim to increase learning opportunities for pre-school children; provide relief and stimulation for pre-school children affected by AIDS (e.g. HIV-positive children, orphans and children with terminally ill parents); and build the capacity of communities to be able to care for and stimulate their children

**Lubuto*Empowerment*:** This program will incorporate elements of legal, economic and social empowerment. The legal empowerment component will give children and youth tools to understand, navigate within, and flourish under the nation’s legal system, as well as to provide an understanding of their personhood under International Human Rights Law and Zambian law, thereby improving self-esteem. The economic empowerment component will target adolescents, integrating youth into society through skills training and information provision on market trends, and providing the critical link between youth and the job market. Sessions will include topics such as identifying viable business opportunities, understanding current market conditions and trends, developing business plans, managing finances and accounting, mobilising resources, networking and business promotion. The social empowerment component will include sessions on peer education and leadership, advocacy and civic education to enable youth to share information with their peers as well as articulate their needs to local decision-makers.

**Lubuto*Environment*:** This program will teach children how nature works, how trees and plants sustain our lives and how to behave toward nature. Issues of cleanliness, garbage disposal, recycling, energy conservation, growing food naturally, sustaining nature in the urban environment and global warming will be discussed with the children and interested adults of the immediate community.

***Activity 2.4:*** *Conduct outreach in surrounding communities to reach vulnerable and marginalised children and youth*

Socially isolated children and youth, including street children and out-of-school girls and boys, are invited to participate in library programs and to understand these welcoming libraries as “home” – a place especially for them, whether or not they can read. Because this openness has not generally been expected from libraries, outreach to this hard-to-reach target audience is critical. From its first two libraries in Lusaka, LLP outreach staff goes onto the streets regularly and invites youth to participate in library programs. Specially targeted efforts are made to reach girls, members of child-headed households, and other children and youth in vulnerable circumstances but not easily reached on the streets. Promotional materials have been or will be developed to assist outreach workers in interesting children in the library, such as branded tee shirts, caps, and wristbands, eye-catching signs and banners directing youth to the libraries, and printed materials with effective graphics.

***Activity 2.5:*** *Establish linkages to other support services and facilities*

Lubuto library staff are trained to identify needs of library users and, if they cannot meet those needs resources (materials and programs) of the libraries, it is their responsibility to connect them with the social services or facilities that can help them. This type of “information and referral” service makes the libraries critical points of connection, especially for the most vulnerable children and youth. Library staff advocate on behalf of the rights and needs of their users, refer them to clinics, child protection agencies, schools, and other services. This frontline identification of children in need – and connection to adults who can help them - plays an important role in the nation’s social safety net. Partnership with PCI will strengthen referral links to Ministry of Health (MoH) health facilities and community outreach health services to increase children’s access to available health services.

**Result 3: Capacity of communities and educators to provide quality services and support to children and youth is increased.**

***Activity 3.1:*** *Provide continuous professional development to library staff*

LLP’s training model includes long-term in-service training of library staff by expert volunteers and short-term specialised training in library management, services and other issues. Library staff will be trained in children’s and youth library services such as outreach; book selection, read-aloud, storytelling and book-based literacy programs; ICT use and oversight; use and promotion of book collections and programs, searching the LLP online catalogue and creation of special bibliographies for users; management and evaluation of book collections, facilities and services; acquisition of new library materials; and coordinating programs and services*.* LLP provides and trains staff in systems to collect data on library use and impact, compiles data on users and the collections and provides ongoing professional guidance to the library programs, as well as new programs and materials for the book collections. In-service trainers will work with LLP management and advisors to develop a comprehensive training manual that will enhance traditional library education to build capacity for dynamic, high quality, child-oriented Lubuto Library services.

***Activity 3.2:*** *Sensitise library staff and teachers on key issues (e.g. working with vulnerable children)*

Putting children first is a fundamental principle of Lubuto Libraries, which recognise the rights all of the children and youth to be treated with respect and dignity. But the most vulnerable, in particular, require special efforts to build their confidence and self-esteem and library staff and teachers often need to be sensitised to those needs. LLP makes clear that that is a priority in all programs, and endeavours to protect and advocate for vulnerable youth through our libraries. Teachers and conventionally-trained librarians are often not equipped to deal with the particular needs of out-of-school adolescents, young girls who care for family members or who are mothers themselves, children of sex workers, and children traumatised by domestic or street violence, orphaning, or extreme poverty. Finally, library staff and teachers generally need training to know how to identify and use excellent children’s literature and non-curriculum (trade) books to support classroom instruction, or to provide out-of-school youth with opportunities to learn and prepare them to attend school. Staff and teachers will also learn to use Lubuto*Literacy* computer-based mother-tongue reading lessons in the libraries and classrooms.

***Activity 3.3:*** *Train community volunteers to offer library services and programs*

Lubuto’s in-service library trainers and program partners train community volunteers to offer the library’s various programs. This is primarily done by modelling high-quality library services to children and teens such as read-aloud, storytelling and otherwise interacting with youth in the library as positive role models and supportive guides. Formal training is provided for community volunteers who wish to participate in Lubuto programs such as Lubuto*Drama*, Lubuto*Mentoring* and others. Community volunteers who wish to develop or offer new programs will be supported by the library trainers.

***Activity 3.4:*** *Raise awareness in the community about the availability and importance of library programs and services*

 Marketing library services, particularly the innovative Lubuto Library services that do not fit people’s traditional perceptions of a “library,” is an essential, ongoing activity of the Lubuto Library Project and individual Lubuto Libraries. It is done in every encounter between library and program staff and the community, not only between those who naturally come to use the library. Interactive meetings and presentations are necessary. Lubuto Libraries have highly visible and well-promoted opening events to introduce themselves to the community, and children are actively identified and brought in large numbers to the openings. Awareness is also heightened by participation of community members in library programs, such as inclusion of caregivers in the Lubuto*Mentoring* program and community performances by the Lubuto*Drama* program. This exposure to the libraries builds strong support within the community. Moreover, the ZLS-LLP partnership will raise the profile and positive perceptions of ZLS and MOESVT.

***Activity 3.5:*** *Support learning and sharing within the Lubuto Library network.*

In addition to ongoing training within Lubuto libraries and regular sharing of monitoring and evaluative data through Provincial Coordinators, annual workshops will bring together library staff to exchange ideas and experiences. System-wide training will be offered, but the multidirectional communication will also inform LLP’s plans, systems and programs.

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Education planners and implementers need information and understanding of best practice, tools and success stories so that they can make informed decisions. This program provides opportunities to learn how to build upon existing platforms such as the ZLS libraries and best use additional inputs to achieve results for children, youth, communities and the education system in Zambia. As program and library staff, library users, communities, stakeholders and the Ministry learn from each other, adjustments can be made to the activities and approach to increase their relevance and effectiveness.

LLP recognises the critical importance of good M&E, not only for accountability and transparency but for gauging impact and effectiveness, guiding decision-making and institutional learning, and identifying good practices. Knowledge sharing is a key component of the Lubuto model, and it is therefore critical that all those involved in this program develop their skills in monitoring and evaluation and documentation. Training of program and library staff will be conducted to ensure common understanding of concepts and to agree upon targets and strategies for documenting and sharing information. The training will cover methods and strategies for collecting, analysing, managing and presenting quantitative and qualitative data, with an emphasis on identifying the types of information that is most relevant to different target audiences.

LLP has developed tools and processes to track library usage and participation in library programs, and will work with ZLS to harmonise data collection processes and indicators to the greatest extent possible. At the outset of the project, a comprehensive M&E framework and processes for scaling up data collection and analysis will be developed to ensure transparency and comparability of data. The framework will include both process indicators (to measure whether activities have been carried out as planned) and outcome indicators (to measure progress towards achieving the objectives)

The National Program Manager, with support from the Director of M&E and in close consultation with the project team and other stakeholders, will update M&E tools, develop a centralised database, and provide guidance to project staff. Monitoring will be conducted at every stage using daily registers and sign-in sheets, activity reports, site visits and observation, and training records. The M&E officer will be responsible for data capturing, while the National Program Manager will conduct data analysis and ensure overall data quality. Each library will be visited regularly by the National Program Manager as well as by ZLS.

As with all other aspects of Lubuto Libraries, M&E is a participatory process. Library visits are tracked using a unique sign-in system, simplified so that even those children who cannot yet read or write are included. At the same time, the system is still capable of capturing key information such as gender, first time vs. returning library visitors, and multiple visits by an individual in one day. To gain additional insight and to better understand outcomes and impact, qualitative information will be collected through structured focus group discussions with library users, staff and volunteers, key stakeholders, and community members. Additionally, M&E tools used to gather quantitative data also capture staff and volunteer observations, which add value and meaning to the numbers.

A baseline analysis will be conducted in Year 1 to record the situation before the program begins, and an external mid-term and end-term evaluation will be commissioned to augment the M&E conducted by project staff. Success stories and emerging best practices will be documented and shared via the LLP website, newsletters, conference presentations and other professional and development communication forums.

**SUSTAINABILITY**

Sustainability involves enabling individuals, communities and institutions to contribute to long-lasting impact and adopt systems, attitudes and behaviours that endure well into the future. The Lubuto model ensures that outcomes and impact are not only achieved but sustained. The key strategies for creating lasting effects include promoting full community and beneficiary involvement and ownership, drawing on local resources, working within and strengthening existing structures, making investments in capacity building, and approaching sustainability in a comprehensive and multifaceted way. The establishment of the ZLS Lubuto Libraries in 6 provinces will create the foundation for growth and impact for years to come.

***Full community and beneficiary involvement and ownership***

Children and youth are not passive beneficiaries of this program; they are full participants in all aspects of Lubuto Libraries. Lubuto Libraries fundamentally empower local communities and work with them to identify priority needs and build their capacity. Stakeholder participation and community ownership of this project are key aspects of its long term success. For example, the first Lubuto Library held a “management workshop” soon after its opening that included stakeholders and beneficiaries. In addition, careful attention to M&E will provide clear evidence to communities, partners and key stakeholders of the effectiveness of the program, instilling pride about what they have accomplished and highlighting the benefit of contributing to its continuation.

***Drawing on local resources***

Local partners provide the resources that support low-cost, continuing operations, and help ensure sustainability. Because traditional designs and, to the full extent possible, locally-sourced labour and materials are used, the development of the significant and durable library infrastructure is very cost-effective and maintenance requirements are minimal.

***Working within and strengthening existing structures***

Partnership with ZLS introduces a strong element of long-term institutional sustainability to Lubuto Libraries. ZLS has the mandate and organisational framework in place to provide library services nationally, and Lubuto Libraries will both benefit from and strengthen these. Rather than creating a separate, parallel system for educational service delivery, the introduction of Lubuto Libraries will help revitalise existing library services while raising the visibility of ZLS and the Ministry’s efforts to improve the quality of education in Zambia. In addition, coordination between Lubuto Libraries and government plans, standards, and programs ensures efficiency and relevance, and recognises that government support is essential to sustainability.

***Investing in capacity building***

The Lubuto model devotes substantial effort to building individual, community and institutional capacity in order to ensure continuity of activities and results:

**At the individual level**, library staff, volunteers and community members develop their skills and knowledge through training and ongoing support provided by LLP. Once built, this capacity remains with them and carries over into other aspects of their work and lives. For example, teachers who participated in the initial round of the Lubuto*Mentoring* program were exposed to participatory teaching methods and now continue to emulate these techniques in their classes. These teachers also felt that after their training in mentoring, they are now able to offer advice to parents who seek help on how to deal with their children’s problematic behaviour and to students who face problems. These types of positive changes motivate individuals not only to continue to use their new knowledge and skills to support the educational and social development of young people, but to remain committed to the libraries as well.

**At the community level**, Lubuto Libraries promote a reading culture and build awareness and understanding of the needs and rights of all children and youth to access high quality education. This initiative therefore creates long-lasting change in the attitudes, norms, and behaviours that ultimately sustain the impact of Lubuto Libraries.

**At the institutional level**, building capacity of local host organisations is a key element of the Lubuto model. In this program, the hosting institutions are ZLS libraries, which means that capacity building efforts will set the stage not just for the Lubuto model to be sustained but to grow well beyond these initial libraries.

***Multifaceted sustainability***

Lubuto’s ‘green’ buildings are carefully designed for sustainability. The substantial structures support many community activities and purposes and the particular needs of targeted OVC. Books and equipment can only be used in the libraries, an important sustainability factor. That the beautiful facilities reflect and preserve indigenous culture inspires pride and emotional investment of community members, a level of cultural sustainability rarely achieved in educational infrastructure.

LLP also appreciates the need for cost-effective interventions that can be taken to scale and do not overburden the financial commitments of the Government of Zambia in the future. To this end, the Lubuto model has been deliberately designed to achieve maximum impact at minimum cost, without compromising quality. Staff at all levels work to leverage additional support from a wide range of sources, such as individuals and communities; local, national and international donors; and the private sector.

**LIBRARIES BREAKING THROUGH PERCEPTUAL BOUNDARIES**

The Lubuto Library Project model, experience and future plans in Zambia have been presented in detail to illustrate an approach to library development that is based on the role libraries can play in national development. Our focus on goals and policy objectives of the national government, as well as providing innovative solutions to development issues/problems that are uniquely approached through libraries, has brought high-level attention to both the Zambia Library Service and Lubuto Library Project. In any environment, offering what society and communities need, aligning with government objectives, and creating solutions to social problems is what makes libraries relevant, understood, needed and a smart investment.

1. *What are the levels and trends in reading and mathematics achievement?* SACMEQ Policy Issues Series. (2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. *Primary Education in Zambia*. IOB Impact Evaluation. (2008). <http://www.netherlandsembassy.org.zm/downloads/Annex%202.1%20IOB%20evaluation%20report.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The State of the Zambian Child. (2010). <http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/364_608.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)